

FIRST THINGS

the problem with liberalism

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evangelizing theology

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medicalizing abortion decisions

THOMAS MURPHY GOODWIN

the catholic luther

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Correspondence

Race and the O. J. Verdict

I offer two comments on James Nuechterlein's otherwise excellent column on the O. J. Simpson verdict ("O. J. Simpson & the American Dilemma," December 1995). Mr. Nuechterlein makes two assertions in his article that echo commonly held opinions in the media and society in general.

1. That O.J. Simpson was "obviously guilty" and that the verdict therefore reveals that the jurors willfully suspended "rational deliberation" to "reflexively side with 'one of their own.'"

2. That defense lawyer Johnnie Cochran "grotesquely" equated Mark Fuhrman's racism with Hitler's anti-Semitism.

Mr. Nuechterlein is not alone in these viewpoints, but I think their acceptance as obvious and common wisdom ought to be challenged.

Regarding the first: I do not accept that the jury's decision was an obvious suspension of rational judgment and an obvious identification with "one of their own." Simply by the numbers this assertion is wrong; one-fourth of the jury, it ought to be remembered, belonged to the Caucasian race—more than enough to make for a hung jury. I find it hard to believe that a jury would spend three-fourths of a year cut off from home and work and family, watching such a soap opera of a trial, only to cast reason and civic responsibility aside to return a verdict of not guilty. I believe they decided the case on its merits and by the standard of assurance of guilt required: "beyond reasonable doubt." If one does not agree with them, at least one can respect their integrity in reaching the decision. (Personally, I never thought O. J. committed the crime.)

Regarding the second assertion: The comparison is not so overdrawn as one might at first believe. There is an unfortunate tendency to think that a Hitler and the Holocaust is something that could happen only to Jews. I suggest that the only difference between the "rogue cop"

Fuhrman and the "ex-rogue painter" Hitler is one of *relative* power. Hitler, simply, was able to acquire the power to put his sick racist ideas into practice. We ought not forget that Hitlers do not appear overnight, out of nowhere; they arise from the common sea of humanity, which can produce both saints like Mother Teresa, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or Martin Luther King, and sinners like Mark Fuhrman.

Otherwise, Mr. Nuechterlein's article is a fine piece and echoes exactly some of the themes I included in sermons the Sundays after the trial; on these two issues, however, I think he was guided more by popular opinion than serious reflection.

(The Rev.) Daniel V. Biles III
Bendersville Lutheran Parish
Bendersville, PA

James Nuechterlein says that the defendant was "obviously guilty," and calls the evidence against him "overwhelming."

As a former First Assistant District Attorney of Philadelphia, and leading counsel on one side or the other in many murder trials, I disagree. Where there is no eyewitness and no confession, as in the Simpson trial, evidence is seldom "overwhelming." The prosecution presented against Mr. Simpson a diligently assembled circumstantial case, but again and again the question of its believability came back to the believability of the Los Angeles police.

For example, the prosecution relied on the testimony of experts as to which body certain blood specimens came from. The experts, we may hope, were honest. But for each such specimen of blood, the jury had only the word of the Los Angeles police as to whether it had been found at the crime scene or was instead a portion of the blood taken by the police from Mr. Simpson's person upon his (voluntary) return from Chicago. And from their years of residence in Los Angeles, jurors were on notice that the word of Los Angeles police was suspect; indeed—as Detective Fuhrman has con-

firmed—that it has been commonplace for Los Angeles police to perjure themselves in order to convict African Americans if they deem them to be guilty.

Thus Mr. Simpson's blood, said by the police to have been found at the crime scene, may not have been found there at all, and the edifice of expert testimony stood on a foundation of sand.

This is a case in which the defendant may or may not have been guilty. If the jurors lacked faith in the police, and if much of the prosecution's case was believable only if the police were to be trusted, who are we to say that the unanimous doubt of the jurors was unreasonable? Unlike the rest of us, the jurors, black and white, were able to hear, observe, and appraise all the testimony of every witness.

Michael von Moschzisker
Sarasota, FL

James Nuechterlein's article overlooks the fact that "the race card" was played from the beginning, and Fuhrman's entry really made no difference in the verdict.

The fix was in even before the minority-ridden defense, the minority-ridden prosecution, and the minority judge began the trial. Los Angeles, that former great city turned urban disaster through "multiculturalism," wanted no repeat of the billion-dollar Rodney King riot, with its loss of fifty-three lives.

Instead of holding the trial in Santa Monica, where Brentwood crimes are supposed to be tried and the jury pool is overwhelmingly white, District Attorney Gil Garcetti moved the case downtown. On the slight chance that O. J. might be found guilty, the verdict could then be blamed on a largely black jury.

Despite all the evidence presented that proved beyond any reasonable juror's reasonable doubts that O. J. was indeed guilty as sin, no black juror could dutifully cast a guilty vote and then return to his or her ghetto and face his or her brothers and sisters.

The pretrial wheeling and dealing in the Simpson case amounted to an

outright perversion of our legal system, and it led inexorably to one of the great perversions of justice in our time. . . .

Edward J. Toner, Jr.
Brick, NJ

. . . What makes Mr. Simpson's guilt obvious? Why, DNA, "scientific evidence." It merely confirms, however, the scientific "fact" (social science this time) that wife-beaters murder their wives. Any evidence to the contrary, such as the Fuhrman story, shows only the sly cleverness of defense attorneys, even though a number of policemen in New York and Philadelphia are right now standing trial for planting evidence.

I am an old white lady, a Southerner, not a football or television or advertising fan. I had never heard of O. J. Simpson before every conversation I took part in brought home my woeful ignorance. I even watched the trial occasionally, though for the most part I relied on newspaper reports. After the verdict, my friends wore long faces of mourning, and their private reactions mirrored those of the whole country—except black folk, of course.

If we are to bridge the gulf between the races that everybody now talks about as compulsively as the trial, we ought to introduce some new subject matter. How about the fact that from the beginning the Simpson case has been wrested from the realm of justice and made a feminist cause; thinking Mr. Simpson guilty is dogma for orthodox sisters and fellow-travelers. Even to express doubt has become tantamount to favoring wife-beating. . . .

It is far safer to talk about the "gulf between the races" than to bring up science's unauthoritative authority or the slash-and-burn tactics of zealous feminists, but might we at least wonder why most blacks remain skeptical of the conventional wisdom?

Eloise K. Goreau
Princeton, NJ

James Nuechterlein replies:

I appreciate Pastor Daniel V. Biles' kind words, but at the risk of appear-

ing ungracious, I must take exception to his criticisms. I did not say that the black members of the jury reflexively sided "with one of their own." I said that of black Americans in general, adding that "that sort of instinctive solidarity is quite understandable." My dismay was over the widespread sense in the black community that this is "a pervasively racist society in which a conspiracy in the white legal establishment to convict an innocent black is not simply plausible but in fact reflects the normal course of affairs." I then added that "it is only in this context that the Simpson jury's apparent willingness to accept the defense's unsubstantiated charges of evidence-planting makes sense." For the record, the composition of the jury was nine blacks, two Hispanics, and one non-Hispanic white. Pastor Biles speaks of the jury's "integrity": Is that the right word for a group that barely deliberated over the mountain of evidence before it?

As for the Hitler-Fuhrman comparison, "grotesque" is indeed the appropriate term. Fuhrman said vile things about blacks, as had countless others before him. Countless people have also said vile things about Jews; Hitler was directly responsible for the murder of six million of them. Need more be said?

Michael von Moschzisker argues, as did the Simpson defense, that the prosecution's case failed because the Los Angeles police could not be trusted. Surely he does not mean that it is legitimate for jurors to vote to acquit on nothing more than a generalized suspicion of police behavior. They have the duty to attend to the facts of the case before them. Anyone who observed the trial with attention could see that the defense relied not on specific evidence of police misbehavior but on loose charges of conspiracy. By Mr. von Moschzisker's line of reasoning, no criminal jury in Los Angeles should ever convict any minority defendant who does not confess or is not caught in the act. In this particular case, the evidence—a good deal of which the police could not conceivably have planted—was indeed "overwhelming."

Edward J. Toner, Jr. has his own conspiracy theories, only in his scenario—if I read him correctly—the prosecution rigged its own defeat (“the fix was in”) by trying the case in downtown Los Angeles before a mostly black jury because city officials, including the District Attorney, feared another Rodney King riot. Mr. Toner blames this, it seems, on “multiculturalism,” which I concede has a lot to answer for, but according to its responsibility for O. J. Simpson’s acquittal seems a bit of a stretch.

Eloise K. Goreau oddly equates real science—in this case, DNA evidence—with the pseudo-science of feminist dogma. But there is a difference. Wife-beaters may or may not become wife-killers; DNA dependably indicates whose blood is whose. You don’t need to be a feminist to believe that O. J. Simpson did in fact kill his wife.

Conscience and Compromise

I am amazed at the semantic gymnastics employed by Clarke D. Forsythe in his essay “Doing What Can Be Done” (December 1995).

As someone who embraces the pro-life principle that each and every innocent human being is a child of God, worthy of total protection in a truly just society, allow me to point out that too many years of failed strategy and tactics are at the root of the problems we now face as a movement. I do not judge the intention of a pro-lifer who truly believes that he or she is doing the best that can be done, but along with many in this movement, I do question maneuvers like those employed during the long campaign to pass a so-called partial-birth abortion ban. Such tactics are indicative of a malaise in much of the politically driven segment of the pro-life movement.

The U.S. Supreme Court has embraced the wanton killing of innocent children as a “right” belonging only to the mother. At the same time, however, the reality of what abortion has done to our society, to our families, and to our sensitivity has not gone unnoticed. Though some in the pro-life movement have come to

believe that politics is the only road, and that it is the politicians themselves who should establish the moral ground on which the rest of us must stand if we wish to avoid extending “the reign of the abortion terror,” as Mr. Forsythe describes it, others realize that the best way to challenge the crime of abortion is by demanding that it be stopped in its totality.

While some are working to ban a particular abortion procedure (partial-birth abortion) that accounts for less than 1 percent of all child-killings in this nation, the proponents of abortion are busy refining other ways to kill those same children. Are we blind? Are we so desperate for a political victory that we have lost sight of what is going on around us in the culture, in society, in our own slowly decaying movement?

How dare any one of us use *The Gospel of Life* to defend our own inability to see these problems! Pope John Paul II, in Section 73 of the *Gospel of Life*, addresses politicians whose total opposition to abortion is well known, statesmen who have battled to protect all the children and find themselves in a difficult position of having to possibly vote for something quite different from that which they set out to accomplish. The partial-birth abortion ban does not fit the criteria at all; in fact, it fits no criteria other than the incrementalist view that we can set aside millions of children scheduled for death while we work very hard to appease the political atmosphere in which we find ourselves by providing elected officials with a safe haven that they can use in order to be reelected. . . .

As John Paul II says in *The Gospel of Life*, “In the proclamation of this Gospel, we must not fear hostility or unpopularity, and we must refuse any compromise or ambiguity which might conform us to the world’s way of thinking.”

Judie Brown, President
American Life League, Inc.
Stafford, VA

Several years ago as a pro-life lobbyist I discussed the question of conscience and compromise with my bishop in great detail. Since his position was

essentially the same as the paragraph of *Evangelium Vitae* quoted by Clark Forsythe in “Doing What Can Be Done,” the bishop’s more detailed explanation may be helpful. Here is his scenario:

A bill containing a small concession is introduced by abortion proponents. Pro-lifers cannot support the bill since it violates pro-life principle. However, a pro-life legislator who makes every effort to improve the bill but who realizes after counting the votes that his improved bill cannot pass is allowed to vote for the original bill since it may save some babies. The pro-life legislator must publicly explain his vote so that there will be no cause for scandal.

Forsythe takes this “conscience clause,” written specifically for the legislator who must vote yea or nay on a less than pro-life bill, and uses it to excuse the pro-life organization sponsoring the bill that violates pro-life principle—the bill that causes the legislator to need a “conscience clause.”

Why? The excuse given by Forsythe is that there are “constitutional and political” limitations that must be recognized, even though he says they must “ultimately” be overcome.

But when is “ultimately”? Those so-called “constitutional” limitations were imposed some twenty-three years ago and they will not be removed by the recognition, however grudging, of the pro-life movement. Those who have already waited more than two decades for “ultimately” believe they have a right and a duty to object strenuously when other pro-lifers offer an *affirmative* defense for the deliberate killing of a preborn child. Whether this defense will be used is not the question. The question is what the pro-life movement actually believes about the sacredness of the preborn child’s life and about the deliberate taking of that life.

For thousands of babies, “ultimately” happens every day, but if the pro-

life movement has become “a carping sideshow,” it may have less to do with the complaints of “all or nothing” pro-lifers and more to do with Forsythe and his friends refusing to support—or even acknowledge—proposed legislation such as HR 1625, which might overcome those “constitutional” limitations we hear so much about.

HR 1625, introduced by a pro-life Congressman, simply states that the constitutional guarantee of the right to life is vested in each human being at fertilization.

It can't be passed? At least it would educate the public correctly: that our Constitution guarantees the right to life of every human being and that abortion is the aberration—not the all or nothing pro-lifers.

Marie Dietz
North Troy, VT

Clarke D. Forsythe replies:

I would like to thank Marie Dietz and Judie Brown for their letters because an ongoing dialogue on pro-life strategy is important.

Neither responds to my legal or constitutional arguments, except to dismiss them as “excuses.” They imply that these obstacles are to be ignored or avoided because the constraints draw a political actor into “violating pro-life principle.” This moral framework is incorrect, and the Pope's passage in section 73, fully understood, explains why. Unfortunately, that framework means that pro-life political actors cannot work effectively in the American policy process, where—by the design of a federal structure and the separation of powers—progress comes, if at all, by “incrementalist” steps.

As to their moral arguments, the scenario posed by Ms. Dietz's bishop is both too abstract and too simplistic to provide clear moral guidance for analyzing the partial-birth abortion bill. It is too abstract because it disregards the role of the courts in American society and assumes that the legislature has the final say. In our federal system, the obstacles that legislators must consider (to be effective and avoid futility) include whether

the bill will survive court review and actually take effect. Nevertheless, if any analogy can be drawn, the pro-abortion legal status quo under *Roe v. Wade* would be “improved” by a law—such as the partial-birth abortion ban—“limiting the harm done” by singling out and banning one particular type of abortion procedure.

The scenario is too simplistic because it assumes that a legislator can count every vote with certainty ahead of time, make an easy decision between two (and only two) clear alternatives, with plenty of time to cast a decisive vote. The process in the U.S. Congress is not that simple, and the process in the state legislatures is often more complicated. Thus, the real obstacles that political actors face are more complicated than the bishop's scenario supposes.

For example, the political constraints on passing the partial-birth abortion bill were real. Since my article was published, the bill passed the Senate by a slim margin and a pro-abortion amendment to gut the bill by replacing the “life of the mother affirmative defense” with a broad “health” exception was defeated by only the narrowest of margins. Even so, the life of the mother affirmative defense was weakened to become a real exception.

Ms. Dietz's distinction between legislators and organizations in the movement suggests an overly narrow understanding of a social reform movement—the notion that legislators can morally act to achieve less than everything in the legislature but that the movement on the outside must march in lockstep under a banner of “no compromise.” These sharp moral categories are not compelled by section 73. Social reform movements are, of necessity, more complex, and that complexity reflects the different facets of political action in a democratic republic. An effective social reform movement contains political activists and strategists, grass roots organizers, scholars, lawyers, writers, and political leaders, among others. There is a critical role for those who would constantly hold up the highest standard and measure progress against that stan-

dard (the “no compromisers”), but if legislators are to “achieve the greatest measure of justice that the world in which they are acting admits,” there is a legitimate and necessary role for other actors who can equip those legislators to achieve less than all.

Ms. Dietz asserts that I have “refus[ed] to support—or even acknowledge” HR 1625. In fact, the sponsor never sent HR 1625 to me, and I have never been asked to support or acknowledge it.

In response to Ms. Brown, I submit that a sound moral argument must fairly take account of practical constraints (what she seems to scorn as “politics”). To reiterate, “The wise statesman will act to achieve the greatest measure of justice that the world in which he is acting admits.” In so acting it must be remembered, as Aristotle noted in his *Ethics*, that “actions done under constraint . . . are involuntary.” And as Thomas Reid, appealing to the same tradition, stated, “What is done from unavoidable necessity . . . cannot be the object either of blame or moral approbation.” Hence, by “limiting the harm done” or “lessening the negative consequences,” we do not admit or support the rest of the evil that we do not have the power (legal or political) to touch now. Recognizing that an abortion is already authorized by overarching (more powerful) law (i.e., *Roe v. Wade*) does not constitute cooperation with, or participation in, any abortion. And I take section 73 in the Pope's encyclical to agree with this. I stand ready to be corrected by a closely reasoned moral argument, but Ms. Brown does not make it.

If she is making the prudential argument that promoting the partial-birth abortion legislation did more damage than good because of the “life of the mother affirmative defense,” I submit that just the opposite is true. First, “at the level of general opinion” (to use the Pope's phrase), the partial-birth abortion bill has educated the public about the humanity of the unborn child, the breadth of the abortion license, and the brutal nature of that procedure, while less than .001 of 1 percent of

Americans have read the affirmative defense that troubles Ms. Brown. Second, one of the primary arguments by abortion advocates in Congress was that the bill was only “a first step in prohibiting abortion,” so it was publicly known that the pro-life sponsors and the movement viewed this bill as less than ideal.

As I understand it, Ms. Brown’s position is that including a “life of the mother exception” in legislation is immoral under any circumstances and that an “equal care for both mother and child” position must always be included. Such a categorical position does not take account of political and legal constraints and is not morally correct.

Further dialogue on the morality and medical feasibility of these two positions would be worthwhile. As a practical matter, however, the “equal care” position will not advance the public debate in the near future because it is too abstract to engage or answer the more practical concerns that Americans have with restoring prohibitions against abortion. Public opinion is burdened by many other myths and falsehoods that must first be dismissed.

Finally, concerning Ms. Brown’s reference to “our own slowly decaying movement,” I would encourage her to tour the country to see the infusion of young people into the movement and to observe the fresh and creative initiatives by pro-life leaders in advertising, education, direct services to women and children, and public policy.

Habermas in the South?

I have just read with interest Elizabeth Powers’ article “Habermas on the Upper West Side” (December 1995).

I would like to invite Ms. Powers to leave the Upper West Side of New York City, where she is so manifestly dissatisfied with the neighbors she has to put up with, and return to her roots in the South. In any large Southern city she will be able to acquaint herself with an upper class of citizenry that will equal or surpass her current neighbors in their mate-

rialism, excessive public and private volubility, poor child-rearing practices, and aversion to religion. Only those prospective neighbors will vote Republican, dislike the Clintons as much as she does, and regard Rush Limbaugh and Newt Gingrich as their politically correct role models. . . .

In any event, I wish and pray for Ms. Powers that she find a place to live where she can engage in a more healthy and productive life than the one she now leads. In a more congenial setting perhaps she could give up skulking about her neighborhood finding things and people to dislike, taking furtive notes to document her neighbors’ depravity and silliness, and writing articles that in the end do not convince one that she is anything more than a surly misanthrope with a political agenda.

Susan Young
Tulsa, OK

Sterilizing Churches

While reading Michael W. McConnell’s comments in the symposium on “Religion and the Court 1995” (December 1995), I was reminded of a friend who was a staffer in the House of Representatives in the late 1980s. At the time, the House was considering an (ultimately unsuccessful) effort to nationalize child care, known as the “ABC Bill.” My friend’s boss was unhappy with the idea, partly because churches might have been denied federal funding for their own child care services, and might have been driven out of business by secular providers who did get federal money.

The office was visited by a lobbyist for the National Education Association, which was supporting the ABC Bill. When my friend mentioned the problem with churches not getting the federal money, the lobbyist replied, in an offhand way, that churches probably could get it, but that “they would have to be sterilized.” *Sterilized*. Purged of all religious content: no Bibles, no hymnals, no religious pictures on the wall. To this lobbyist, religion was on the same level as a virus.

This militant antireligion view is

not very far from the *Rosenberger* dissenters, and it has shown up as public policy in other areas. I mention this because, as Mr. McConnell observed, “government pervades more and more of our (formerly private) lives,” and where the government goes, it takes the First Amendment with it. . . .

Alexander T. Nagy
Arlington, VA

Fair to Opus Dei?

I am pleased that Richard John Neuhaus (“The Work of God,” November 1995) finds me “often fair-minded,” though I suspect that is only when my views mirror his—as they often do.

That he detects a “long-standing hostility to Opus Dei” is not quite fair-minded of Father Neuhaus. My writing about Opus Dei has focused almost entirely on the beatification of its founder, not the organization itself. On this point, the only fair-minded conclusion I can reach, given the evidence of the *positio* itself and interviews with people in Rome involved in the process, is that Opus Dei subverted the canonization process to get its man beatified. In a word, it was a scandal—from the conduct of the tribunals through the writing of the *positio* to the high-handed treatment of the experts picked to judge the cause. That *Newsweek* caught Opus Dei officials making claims that were not true is a matter of record. Escriva may have been a saint—who am I to judge?—but you could never tell from the way his cause was handled.

Then, too, there is the matter of the banality of his writings, especially the axioms. Not the sort of stuff, I think, to build a spiritual community around. As for the organization itself, I’m sure it meets the needs of some Catholics. But as a parent, I am naturally inclined to worry about its methods and to take more seriously than does Father Neuhaus the complaints of those who feel they have lost a child to the organization. I, too, thought Jim Martin did a good job in his *America* piece, and am sorry only that so many folks felt they could not

speak on the record. Whatever else it does, Opus Dei strikes fear in the timid and the mitred.

I've met some likable people in Opus Dei but I'd hate to have my daughter marry one. To be fair-minded, I wouldn't want her to wed a Jesuit either, though I hope she'd ask one to say the nuptial mass.

Kenneth L. Woodward
Newsweek
New York, NY

A Case of Distortion?

Richard Neuhaus' comments on the "Cry for Renewal" (Public Square, November 1995) present a classic case of distortion.

Fr. Neuhaus seeks to identify The Cry largely with mainline Protestant leaders like Episcopal Bishop Edmond Browning and the NCC's Joan Campbell. One would wish Fr. Neuhaus would get his facts correct. Evangelical leaders were centrally engaged in drafting the document. They were the largest group participating at the May 1995 launch. Signers included Stephen Hayner, the President of the largest evangelical university student movement (IVCF); prominent evangelical pastors Gordon MacDonald and David Fisher; leading evangelical women (Roberta Hestenes, former chair of World Vision International); prominent evangelical African American and Hispanic leaders (William Pannell, Luis Madrigal, Eldin Villafane); the two top leaders of the largest evangelical grassroots community development program (John Perkins, Wayne Gordon from CCDA); prominent evangelical publishers (Bruce Ryskamp of Zondervan); the head of the Salvation Army in the U.S. (Commissioner Kenneth L. Hodder); and many other widely known and respected evangelical leaders like

Richard Foster, Karen and David Mains, Pete Hammond, and James Packer.

Prominent Catholics also signed, including Bryan Hehir.

To carp about the absence of specific theological issues in a short political manifesto of this sort is a silly cheap shot. To suggest that a document that stresses God's concern for the poor, the family, the environment, racism, and the dignity and equality of women has "little or nothing to do with biblical faith" is astounding. Fr. Neuhaus needs to reread the document or the Bible—or both.

The document contains the signature of J. I. Packer and a number of other prominent evangelical leaders precisely because they agree with the central concern of the "Cry for Renewal"—namely, its call for a new Christian political engagement that truly seeks to get beyond captivity to both left-wing and right-wing ideology. (A number of them also played a key role in drafting the document.)

Is it too much to ask Fr. Neuhaus to be fair in his critique?

Ronald J. Sider, President
Evangelicals for Social Action
Wynnewood, PA

RJN replies:

It is not too much at all. With excruciating fairness (for one knows how sensitive some folk are to criticism), I mentioned the mainline/oldline Protestant leaders because they were the ones highlighted in Frank Rich's column in the *New York Times*, on which I was commenting. And because they are better known to most of the readers of this journal. And because they have a long track record of trying to recruit religion to partisan political purposes, a ploy that "Cry for Renewal" both deplores

and perpetrates. The problem is not that "a short political manifesto" is devoid of "specific theological issues." The problem is that it claims to be speaking in the name of "biblical faith" but says nothing that is not said, although more temperately, by the *Nation* or the editorial page of the *Times*. While people of biblical faith may agree with the politics agitated by those publications and by "Cry for Renewal," that political posture has "little or nothing to do with biblical faith." It is the product of an utterly conventional left-wing ideology embraced also by non-Christians and anti-Christians who agree with "Cry of Renewal" in its stridently partisan attack on Christians of a politically conservative persuasion. Those who doubt that this is an accurate characterization of "Cry for Renewal" might write Ronald Sider (10 East Lancaster Avenue, Wynnewood, PA 19096) and I expect he would send them a copy.

Erratum

A partial error appeared in the author's identification for the article by Bernard N. Nathanson, M.D., "The Abortion Cocktail," in the January issue. It should have said that Dr. Nathanson is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Bioethics at the Center for Clinical and Research Ethics at Vanderbilt University.

—The Editors

Letters to the editors are welcome. They should address items published in the current issue. Letters are subject to editing for brevity and clarity. While we cannot publish or respond to all letters received, each is carefully considered by the editors.

Welfare: Moynihan's Counsel of Despair

Talk to those who know about such things and they'll tell you that Daniel Patrick Moynihan has read more and thought more about welfare policy than just about anyone alive. Certainly more than any other politician. In books such as *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* and *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income*, Moynihan chronicled the follies by which the federal government hemorrhaged literally trillions of dollars to "solve" the problem of poverty, only to have the country end up with millions of people in an ever more radically isolated underclass.

Moynihan's was not a strident polemic against poverty warriors, for he himself was an architect of some of the bungled efforts launched in the Johnson and Nixon Administrations. Rather, his was an ironic commentary on the improbability of government being able to do much of anything to change the way people live. Long before "family politics" came into fashion, Moynihan dared to point out the connection between poverty and the collapse of the black family, thereby making himself the target of armies of outraged academics and activists who attacked him for "blaming the victim."

But Pat Moynihan more than survived the attack. As Senator from New York he was for years respected by Democrats and Republicans alike as *the* congressional expert on welfare. When in 1992 Bill Clinton ran on the promise to "end welfare as we know it," and when in 1994 the Republican majority declared its determination to get serious about welfare reform, many thought Moynihan's time had come around at last.

What happened seems to have surprised almost everybody. Far from being a key player in the overhauling of the welfare system, Moynihan unleashed a series of complaints, ranging from the petulant to the apocalyptic. Sixty years of social

policy, he says, is being mindlessly dismantled by "the monstrous political deception embodied in the term 'welfare reform.'" Millions of children will join the ranks of the homeless trying to get a little warmth by sleeping on the grates in our city streets. "The defenders of the old activism toward the poor," complains Moynihan, "surrendered willingly, with the shrugs and indifference of those who no longer believed in what they stood for." The Democratic minority that fusses over saving bits and pieces of the old welfare system is, he says, "literally arranging flowers on the coffin of the provision for children in the Social Security Act."

Moynihan does not defend the old system because it works. On the contrary, he is a master of the tale of good intentions done in by the law of unintended consequences. In an extended jeremiad in the *Congressional Record*, he says he does not disagree with James Q. Wilson's claim that any welfare program significantly funded from Washington will be run "uniformly, systematically, politically, and ignorantly." Further, he does not deny that conservatives are more clear-headed about these problems than liberals. "The great strength of political conservatives at this time (and for a generation) is that they are open to the thought that matters are complex. Liberals have got into a reflexive pattern of denying this. I had hoped twelve years in the wilderness [the Reagan-Bush years] might have changed this; it may be it has only reinforced it." Moynihan, then, does not defend the welfare status quo because liberals are right and conservatives are wrong, and certainly not because it works. He defends it because he believes there is no alternative to it. When the time for welfare reform came around at last, Moynihan's ironic criticism had turned into despair.

Moynihan's onslaught against "the monstrous political deception" of welfare reform has been

joined by the big charities, the oldline churches, and the Catholic bishops, all of whom incessantly point out that nobody but the federal government has the resources to maintain existing welfare programs. But that rather entirely misses the point. The point is that most of the existing programs should not be maintained, that they are actually hurting the poor by putting and keeping them in a posture of dependency and perpetual political supplication. The point is that, in the absence of knowing what might actually change the behavior that is the chief cause of poverty, free rein should be given to state, local, and nongovernmental experiments.

The big charities, the churches, and other advocates of the welfare status quo are not as candid as Senator Moynihan about the human catastrophe reinforced by current policies. But one suspects that many of them agree, at least intuitively, with his counsel of despair. Millions of people, Moynihan notes, have for generations become accustomed to living outside the circle of social responsibility and economic productivity. Under the AFDC program alone, started sixty years ago to provide temporary help to a relative handful of widows and jobless women with children, well over half the families receiving benefits now *begin* as AFDC families. In almost all cases, these are women with children born out of wedlock, and Moynihan notes that "there are millions of families in just this circumstance."

A major political problem, and it is also a compassion problem, is that most of the country is untouched by this catastrophe. Those who are on AFDC for a short time are more or less evenly distributed across the land, while those who are more or less permanently on the dole are concentrated in the cities. In 1993, Moynihan notes, 59 percent of the children in Atlanta, 66 percent in Cleveland, 55 percent in Miami, 57 percent in Philadelphia, and 66 percent in Newark were receiving AFDC. Most of these children and their mothers have never known and possibly will never know any other way of life than living on welfare. In many cases, the mothers and grandmothers of these mothers never knew anything but welfare. "If welfare were a smallish problem—if this were 1955 or even 1965—an argument could be made for turning the matter back to state government," says Moynihan. "But it is now so large a problem that governments of the states in which it is most concentrated simply will not be able to handle it."

Welfare reform proposals in Congress, especially provisions to put time limits on the reception of benefits, "will produce a surge in the number of homeless children such that the current problem of 'the homeless' will seem inconsequential," declares Moynihan. Then comes the most stark and chilling statement of his counsel of despair: "I believe our present social welfare system is all but overwhelmed. . . . Hundreds of thousands of these children live in

households that are held together primarily by the fact of welfare assistance. Take that away and the children are blown to the winds. [An] Administration analysis concludes that the welfare conference agreement [between House and Senate] will force 1.5 million children into poverty. To say what I have said before here in the Senate: young males can be horrid to themselves, horrid to one another, horrid to the rest of us."

Yes, it is a human catastrophe. And yes, there is no alternative to it. Moynihan's declaration is the domestic equivalent of George Kennan's famous "X" article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in the July 1947 *Foreign Affairs*. Communism is doing horrible things to people, but there is nothing to be done except to brace ourselves to maintain a policy of "containment," at enormous expense and for as long as anyone can see into the future. Containment may have been good foreign policy, but it is a very different matter to urge, as Senator Moynihan does urge, containment against an enemy within. Young males of the welfare-dependent mainly black urban underclass "can be horrid to themselves, horrid to one another, horrid to the rest of us." Dismantle the defense system of the welfare status quo and you loose them upon society.

Most revealingly and depressingly, Moynihan concludes his declaration by drawing an analogy with the "deinstitutionalization" of mental patients in the 1960s and 1970s. That fatal step resulted in the hundreds of thousands of "homeless" wandering our streets in alcoholic and drug-induced stupor. But most of them are not dangerous. The thugs who do "horrid things" carry knives and guns. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," according to Kennan, were ideological and nationalistic. The sources of welfare conduct, according to Moynihan, are in congenital criminality and general social incompetence. In both cases, there is nothing to be done for it except containment.

"These children live in households that are held together primarily by the fact of welfare assistance. Take that away and the children are blown to the winds." Is that true? How does he know that? Has the underclass descended to such a subhuman level that there are no bonds of love and obligation—between mothers and children, among networks of relatives, within churches and charitable organizations? In the absence of a welfare check, would they really turn millions of children out on the streets? We must not, we do not, believe that.

Senator Moynihan says that limiting welfare would do nothing to change the behavior of men who are so largely responsible for the depredations of the underclass. He does not know that either. The fact is that men who have fathered five or more children and are father to none live off the welfare checks of "their" women. Absent that check, they may turn to crime, although many are already supplementing

their income by criminal activity. Absent that check, on the other hand, many might get a job. It is true that human beings do not act simply by a rational calculus of incentives and disincentives. It is also true that the incentives and disincentives of the welfare system of the last thirty years have positively encouraged the behavior that produced the tragedy of the underclass. Poor people are not pure rational calculators, but neither are they stupid. A fifteen-year-old girl might think twice about getting pregnant and having a baby if there were no reward of a biweekly check and an apartment of her own. (There is reason to believe that such a change would also reduce the incidence of abortion, but nobody knows; and, until we do know one way or the other, that consideration must be discounted in the debate over welfare reform.)

We do not doubt that Senator Moynihan and those of like mind care deeply about the human tragedy of the underclass. They are not ignorant of the fact that the AFDC children who will never have a father—and maybe do not know what a father is in the sense that most of humanity understands the term—are many times more likely to drop out of school, to be unemployable, to be drug addicted, to be criminals, to be imprisoned, and to die young and violently. Millions of children sleeping on street grates is a scarifying and, we believe, improbable specter. Everyday life in Bedford-Stuyvesant, South Chicago, and a hundred other places is the present reality that is perpetuated, in large part, by the welfare status quo that is defended by Senator Moynihan, by the social work bureaucracies, and by too many of our churches.

The purpose of welfare policy should be to move people out of dependency into the mainstream of social responsibility and opportunity. Senator Moynihan would no doubt agree with that. It is just that he no longer thinks it can be done. As with criminals and the insane, the poor must be contained. We have tried deinstitutionalization, and it doesn't work. It does no good for them, and it lets loose a popula-

tion that can do horrid things to the rest of us.

In 1968, Edward Banfield published *The Unheavenly City*, one of the most important public policy books of the past half century. Banfield estimated that about 6 percent of any population is socially incompetent. That is, for whatever reason—physical or mental handicap, criminal disposition, severe deprivation—6 percent of the population is simply not able to get on with their lives in any productive way. To a greater or lesser degree, somebody will have to take care of them. In the utopian sixties when everything was declared to be possible—not least winning “the war against poverty”—Banfield was widely reviled as a reactionary prepared to consign millions of people not simply to second-class citizenship but to virtual non-citizenship. Compared with Pat Moynihan, Banfield was an optimist.

In the Banfield view, the socially incompetent were more or less evenly spread across the society. Moynihan's social incompetents are concentrated in the inner cities, and are mainly black. One may accept Banfield's analysis while contending that the incompetent should be cared for. Moynihan says they must be contained. An older tradition says they should be cared for out of altruism and fellow-feeling, as well as self-interest. Moynihan says they should be contained or else they will do horrid things to their children who will, in turn, do horrid things to “the rest of us.” Banfield's estimate of 6 percent may be too high, but the recognition that some people are and always will be socially incompetent is necessary realism. Moynihan's resignation to the permanence of the welfare underclass is unwarranted despair.

As we said, over the years few people have done so much to help us understand the perplexities of welfare as Daniel Patrick Moynihan. In these latter days, and however inadvertently, he has in his opposition to reform helped us to understand why there is no practical or moral alternative to exploring a radically different approach to welfare. It is surely not what he intended, but we are again in his debt. FT

THIS TIME

Idols of the Century

James Nuechterlein

Traditionalists find themselves ill at ease—to put it mildly—in today’s postmodernist intellectual world, a world whose “animating spirit,” as Gertrude Himmelfarb puts it, “is a radical relativism and skepticism that rejects any idea of truth, knowledge, or objectivity” (“The Christian University: A Call to Counterrevolution,” FT, January). That unease is hardly misplaced. There is indeed much to be feared from a world in which the only true statement is that there are no true statements.

But cause for concern is not necessarily cause for despair. Traditionalists need to remind themselves that conditions in the intellectual world, as in the culture in general, are almost always in a state of disarray. That is the way of human perversity, a perversity especially characteristic among intellectuals. I can think of no time in this century, with the possible exception of the 1950s, when it was not the predominant view among cultural conservatives that things were in very bad shape indeed (and even the fifties are regarded more fondly in retrospect than they were at the time). For traditionalists, heresy always threatens and more often than not seems in the ascendancy.

It is of course no great consolation in any particular bad time to be reminded that all times are more or less bad. But it does offer useful perspective—especially when one recalls heresies of the century prior to, and considerably more persuasive than, postmodernism.

It was the towering figures of Marx and Freud that dominated much of the intellectual life of this century. Darwin was actually the third of the great modernist triumvirate, but for much of our times his standing, because of the conservative uses to which his theories could be put, has been somewhat ambiguous. (It is significant to note, however, that of the three, he alone today still wields important intellectual influence. One might say, indeed, that modernist intellectuals’ effort to rescue naturalism has, in the retreat of Marx and Freud, turned with necessary enthusiasm to Darwin.)

It may be difficult for young people today to appreciate the effort it took for those of earlier generations to escape the shadows of Marx and Freud. My own intellectual generation of the fifties came at the tail end of their dominance. I recall vividly, as a would-be intellectual, wondering how the major thinkers of the twenties through the forties had

managed to believe in such improbable things. Yet even as a product of the Cold War fifties and as a Christian of Augustinian persuasion, I found myself having to deal with the residues of ideologies past. Serious people simply had to work their way through Marx and Freud even when, as in my case, the natural instinct was to dismiss them as brilliant cranks.

Freud was particularly influential in literary studies, and I sometimes think that the fading of my early desire to become an English professor came from an overdose of lit crit essays searching out Freudian imagery everywhere in the canon. (Once you’re on the lookout for phallic symbols, it’s pretty hard not to find them.) The Freudian insistence on infantile sexuality as the key to human development never made sense to me, and I could not for a moment make myself pretend I thought it true or even plausible. Freudianism provided undoubted insights, but as a system it seemed reductionistic in method, meager in evidence, and circular in logic. (Though I should add that when, years later, I finally got around to reading *Civilization and Its Discontents*, I found it more impressive than anything I had earlier encountered in the Freudian corpus.)

As my interests shifted to American history and political thought, it was Marx with whom I had to come to terms. There weren’t, of course, many self-confessed Marxists on the American intellectual scene during the 1950s, but I was struck by how influential they had been in the previous decades. Marxism was everywhere in the interwar years, sometimes in dogmatic form, more often in a generalized emphasis on class or group warfare that became a commonplace of historical analysis. Charles Beard’s widely influential progressive school of American historiography depended heavily on Marxian ways of thinking. Even so committed an anti-Communist (and non-Marxist) as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. took class conflict as self-evident, and in *The Vital Center* (1949) and elsewhere he depicted the central theme of American politics as the struggle for power between the business community and all other social groups.

And of course Marxian analysis took on renewed life—if, most often, in crudely vulgar forms—in the various liberationist struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, most notably in the anti-Vietnam War movement. It was not until the revolution of 1989 and beyond that Marxism went into intellectual eclipse. Its emotional hold on the left has been such that even now one cannot be sure that it will not revive—indeed, the likelihood is that, after a prudent interval, it will.

Freud and Marx were moderns, not postmoderns. They were not skeptics as to the existence of a real order of things; both thought of themselves as scientists who had uncovered hitherto hidden laws of the universe. It was in fact their appeal to scientific standing that solidified their stature in an age sunk in scientific superstition.

Not that the popularity of their ideas rested on

science alone. Both men were, even as putative scientists, founders of secular religions. The appeal of neither can be understood outside the context of the waning of traditional religious belief among intellectuals. Marxism especially commanded allegiance because of its combination of presumed scientific authority with deep ethical commitment. It was the perfect religion for an intellectual age that assumed it had outgrown God and yet needed an outlet for the moral passions roused by Judaism and Christianity.

We have at last outgrown those who had outgrown God (though in our present state of intellectual confusion that by no means guarantees a return to orthodox belief). We can only wonder at the credulity of all those intellectuals who staked so much on so little evidence. It is ironic that people for whom the evidence of things unseen was presumably not to be credited were themselves beguiled by chimeras. My late-adolescent instincts were right: it takes an

intellectual to believe the truly improbable.

How find comfort in so sorry a tale? Simply by recalling that yesterday's heresies, for all their weaknesses, were intellectually more interesting and compelling than today's. Marxism and Freudianism were both built on dubious premises, but those premises once accepted, each had a certain elegance and could be elaborated in sophisticated ways. Postmodernism, by contrast, is neither interesting nor compelling. It is the natural mind-set of sophomores. Having armed ourselves against theories that explain all reality, we are unlikely to be seduced by the theory that there is no reality to be explained. Postmodernism, however cleverly explicated, simply lacks enough substance to hold one's attention for very long. It is an argument that, except in the negative, has no argument to make.

The lesson for traditionalists? In the weakness of our enemies is our strength. ^[E]

ON EUTHANASIA. All deliberate killing of innocent life is arbitrary. . . . This last principle has not remained uncontradicted. The problem which arises here is the problem of euthanasia. The question of principle is this: Is it permissible to destroy painlessly an innocent life which is no longer worth living? Two kinds of motive lie behind this question, consideration for the sick and consideration for the healthy. But before any particular aspects of the problem can be examined, it is necessary to state, as a matter of principle, that the decision about the right to destroy human life can never be based upon the concurrence of a number of different contributory factors. Either an argument is cogent enough in itself to bring about this decision, or else it is not cogent at all, and if this is the case, no number of good additional reasons can ever justify such a decision. The destruction of the life of another may be undertaken only on the basis of an unconditional necessity; when this necessity is present, then the killing must be performed, no matter how numerous or how good the reasons which weigh against it. But the taking of the life of another must never be merely one possibility among other possibilities, even though it may be an extremely well founded possibility. If there is even the slightest responsible possibility of allowing others to remain alive, then the destruction of their lives would be arbitrary killing, murder. Killing and keeping alive are never of equal value in the making of this decision; the sparing of life has an incomparably higher claim than killing can have. Life may invoke all possible reasons in its cause; but only one single reason can be a valid reason for killing. To fail to bear this in mind is to undo the work of the Creator and Preserver of life Himself. It follows from this that to support the rightfulness of euthanasia with a number of essentially different arguments is to put oneself in the wrong from the outset by admitting indirectly that no single absolutely cogent argument exists.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*
1906-1945

Opinion

Faithful for Life

Ishmael Law

Shortly before his death in 1963 Pope John XXIII issued an encyclical with a novel distribution. Originally encyclicals were circular letters sent to all bishops. In modern times the addressees came to include priests and "all the faithful." But John sent *Pacem in Terris* much further. He proclaimed peace on earth as far as the angels had sung their carol: "to all people of good will."

Paul VI continued this heading on his own great encyclicals, hoping that the cogency of the faith could speak to non-Catholics and non-Christians. And those letters did begin to gain more attention from that broader, ecumenical, and secular audience.

The American bishops did likewise, and with this larger audience in mind they began to address more "public policy" issues. As they did, their mode of approach naturally adapted itself to their more diverse audience: no longer the American Catholics, but the American people . . . and the United States government. More came of this than was intended. For a public that now shared few of their convictions, the bishops were constrained to argue from a thinner philosophical and political gospel. Some thought they were more competent and more responsible to expound the gospel.

Last September the American bishops issued a document that returns to the pastoral tradition of expounding the faith to those who should be able to make sense of it. *Faithful for Life: A Moral Reflection* is addressed to the Catholic flock to whom the bishops are primarily responsible. It is their most cogent pro-life statement thus far. It is believer-friendly, yet it stings. The reason it may gain a wider hearing is that the bishops bottom their argument, not on civic or sociopolitical grounds, but on trademark Catholic beliefs.

The leading issue is fidelity. Abortion and euthanasia are two instances of ultimate infidelity, whereby the most helpless members of families become disposable at will if they are felt to be too burdensome. Abortion and euthanasia, the bishops observe, are both secondary infections of the same infidelity whereby spouses so commonly walk away from one another that the American public can hardly even imagine what it might mean to bind oneself to another, for better or for worse, until death. It is as impossible a notion today as it was when Jesus first said and

showed it. The bishops are pleading that by God's grace we can—we must—live lives that are obligated by other persons and their needs. They say we can manage to do what Jesus did: be faithful to others whether or not they are faithful to us.

Faithful for Life begins with the story of the Good Samaritan, an unwelcome foreigner traveling at his own risk in Judea, who was the only journeyman ready to rescue a mugging victim from the ditch. Two locals, bound not to "stand by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake" (Leviticus 19:16), had looked and hurried the other way. Jesus' praise for this alien, the bishops note, is not for doing a favor, because for him it was a duty too: "The victim didn't need to be kin or countryman of someone to whom the rescuer had made a commitment. Anyone lying helpless in that ditch was neighbor."

"We are all journeying down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho," the bishops say, and this parable haunts us because it scorns the dogma of our day: "that our loyalties and our obligations are owed only to those of our choice. On the contrary, we owe fidelity to those we choose and, beyond them, to others we do not choose. It is *we* who have been chosen to go out of our way for them."

So the bishops come out as "anti-choice." If fidelity is to be Christian it is owed not only to those to whom we pledge it but to those whose needs place an equal claim upon our consciences. The pursuit of one's own "interests," satisfaction, freedom, and preferences—all summed up in "choice"—is the watchword of our culture, and the bishops are explaining how our culture can become deadly.

American society upholds the doctrine that human beings find their ultimate sense and fulfillment in individual freedom. To survive other people's competing endeavors—so this belief runs—we must assert our own solitary "best interests." Spouses must enjoy uninhibited freedom, but respect it in their partners (who are, however, revocable at will). Children (also revocable at will) must be the creatures of explicit parental choice, and once accepted they must be helped quickly into the full possession of their own right to choose (and to fend) for themselves. Grandparents (revocable also) must retain their vigor and their distance so as to enjoy their freedom to choose (but not to impinge too heavily on their children's choices), up to the timely end of their lives. Any decline from autonomy to dependence is felt as an indignity. The desirable outcome of family life, according to this belief, is a pack of freewheeling individualists who enjoy unimpeded liberty to do what they choose, limited minimally by their agreement not to impede one another's liberty. This exaltation of individual free choice has, naturally, put fidelity owed to others into full eclipse.

Predictably, a “plague effect” has been visited on children by their parents’ failures to form or maintain commitments to each other. Studies indicate that the children of severed partnerships are in a great many ways at a disadvantage by comparison with those whose parents remain together. They are more impoverished and more likely to subside into welfare, to perform poorly in their studies and to drop out of school, to become involved in juvenile crime and its legal penalties, to require treatment for physical illnesses and emotional disturbances, and to be at risk for sexual abuse. Even more dismaying, perhaps, are indications that this pathology intensifies as it is passed on. These same children are also more likely to drift into adolescent sex, pregnancy, and cohabitation, and thereby the increased likelihood that their own marriages will disintegrate.

The increasing acceptance of disposable relationships and the exaltation of divorce are but single episodes in a long subversion of fidelity that has changed the nature of the familial undertaking at its root. It is not happenstance that the country which offers the least legal protection in the developed world for the unborn is the same country that offers the least legal protection for the victims of divorce. Abortion and euthanasia, the bishops argue, bring home to us in a newly violent way how drastic is our disbelief in fidelity. For it has become obvious to any Catholic willing to see it that what was once construed as a commitment has shriveled to a wish. “The home becomes the place where, when you knock, they no longer have to let you in.”

The Catholic Church has historically argued that free and deliberate choice is indeed an essential element in any Christian marital bond. But there is a companion teaching. We can and do incur other bonds without choosing them, as when we are begotten by parents and when we are gifted with children. “We are bound to our children, not because we chose them, but because we were given them: simply because they are our children, our very near neighbors.”

Even the marital bond transcends choice, for one has committed oneself not only to the spouse one married, but to that spouse with all of his or her eventual developments of character and circumstance. We cannot discharge ourselves of our spouses or our kinfolk or our neighbors in their authentic needs without damaging our own capacity to love. And once we have accepted this fidelity as an inmost need in our lives, who knows in advance how many times we will have to turn aside from our journeys along that road from Jerusalem to Jericho?

It is clear that the bishops are expressing an unusually sharp critique of the national culture. It is a prophetic moment for them.

“Abortion, and now euthanasia, have become socially accepted acts because many have been per-

suaded that people unfairly lose their freedom when others make claims on them that pose burdens and obligations. In the course of a very few years many people have come to think of an unplanned baby as an unwanted baby, and of an undesired baby as an undesirable one. The prescribed social remedy has been to put an end to the baby’s life before he or she can make a claim on yours.” Such violations of human life and human dignity are now “expounded upon in classrooms, prescribed by physicians, condoned by public figures, protected by courts, subsidized by legislatures, and even advertised in the Yellow Pages. How has it come to pass that the elimination of one’s child or one’s parent, acts of desperation wrought in every age, are now described as sensible and even attractive alternatives?”

Infidelity, once naturalized, easily resorts to violence. Witness the homicides committed by parents upon their children, children upon their parents, spouses upon one another.

In this environment the bishops will not gain an easy hearing for their message that life is a mixture of both choice and acceptance. This nation’s adults are hardly capable of convincing their children that life’s moral imperatives are not *à la carte*.

The bishops do not mention evils more monstrous than abortion and euthanasia, nor do they claim that these two are so pernicious that they must preempt all other moral concerns: genocide, enslavement, environmental devastation, or nuclear destruction. What the bishops do say is that abortion and euthanasia are dreadful outbreaks of the infidelity that darkens our earth with both furtive and flaunted violence.

Our nation has a persistent way of not wanting to peer honestly into that darkness. Consider how prone we are to evade social remedies that carry a personal cost. We are a people scourged with drug seduction and addiction; so we have locked away more of our population than any people in the world. Our affluence has afflicted our country with overweight; so we look for the perfect crash diet, patch, or pill. AIDS sweeps the land like Bubonic Plague, and we want only a pharmaceutical to cure it. Prisons, diets, and drugs are not wrong, but they only nick the edge of these persistent problems.

From their pastoral ministry the bishops know story upon story of valiant people coping with family responsibility in the face of frustration. Yet what has become the “American Way” of family life invites us into shortcuts and sidesteps that can deprive us of the close community we all truly seek. A young couple by cohabiting make marital fracture and eventual divorce more predictable. Our society and often our Church look the other way, put them through a marriage preparation routine, celebrate their wedding, and “hope for the best.”

Some parents who work full-time do so not from family need but to avoid tedious days with children.

They buy dawn-to-dark day care for their parenting, delivered pizza for their meals, and television for their amusement—where children are presented with a hundred thousand sexual situations and two hundred thousand acts of violence before coming of age. Schoolwork slides down the national learning curve, as teachers plead for more parental collaboration, and parents put hope in a cram course for the college entrance exams. The grandparents retire and move toward the sunniest retirement community, where no children are allowed. The teenagers start binge drinking and the neighborhood parents take their turns leaving town for a weekend so that the children can all drink indoors, regularly and “safely.” The kids are having sex too, and school clinics and condoms are going to make it “safe,” though not safe. They don’t use the condoms, the girls get pregnant, and a “safe” abortion is offered as the remedy for that, though for nothing else. The parents eventually get more time together but find they don’t like one another much any more, so they go for counseling; and at the third session the therapist proposes divorce as the obvious remedy. The grandfather dies, and when the grandmother declines into depression she is put in a nursing home with other depressed and abandoned people. One of the divorcees drifts into a later-in-life cohabitation, with the assurance of a compassionate annulment to make it right.

The bishops’ response is radical. “To live in fidelity we have to rearrange our lives, yield control, and forfeit some choices. To evade the full burden of putting ourselves at the disposal of those to whom we belong, to allot them only the slack in our own agendas and not what they require, is to practice desertion by other means.” A life without loving fidelity is eventually lethal.

From beginning to end, *Faithful for Life* makes points intelligible only to those who understand the gospel. The victim of unfaithful violence who suffers the most is not the one killed, but the one who kills. When Jesus says that anyone who lives by the sword will die by the sword, he is warning his disciples that the handle can be more deadly than the blade. The reason we need to protect our helpless neighbor is that the neighbor is “the Lord, who comes in the guise of a stranger. At such times he comes as if his very life depends on our welcome; but it is our lives, not his, that most depend upon it.”

It is a tough message. That is because the gospel is tough. But the bishops are not just harsh. At the end of their pastoral reflection they turn to another story from Scripture: the narrative of Cain and Abel with its lesson that violations of fidelity have a perversity and a severity all their own. The Lord told Cain: “Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground.” Early Christian writers took that as their cue to list the sins that “call to heaven for vengeance”: killing a kinsman, exploiting foreigners, mistreating

orphans and widows, and cheating workers of their wages. “What gave each of these sins voice before God was not only the exploitation of the vulnerable by the powerful, but the misuse of the helpless by those who should have been their protectors.” But then the bishops go on to show how far forward the gospel has carried the Covenant. “Crimes that cry to heaven for vengeance” read differently when the Father in that heaven is a wrathless one whose only “vengeance” is to love and not to hate, to transform but not to punish—a Father who retaliates by drawing the heart of the sinner all the more relentlessly to become faithful. That, of course, goes well beyond what any civil society might understand.

Yet this pastoral meditation, by drawing the gospel beyond what the Constitution could yield, may yet win for the bishops a breakthrough of understanding from both Catholics and other Americans. To be heard peaceably, the bishops will require people of good will. But their prophetic reflection may elicit enough good will to be heard.

The peace they are writing about surpasseth understanding, but beguileth it as well.

ISHMAEL LAW writes on issues of moral theology, especially those dealing with the fostering of life.

To Murmur Name Upon Name

Charles M. Gray

*Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven’s part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child . . .*

— W. B. Yeats, “Easter 1916”

Every year, at the University of Chicago, a ritual of reading out names is performed—the names of University members who have died during the year. A list intoned, a catalogue recited, the mere naming of names—what is the good of that? Around the names cluster stories and myths; each bears a string of epithets; each is a text whose eloquence and whose obscurities merit endless commentary. For some in this audience, a particular name evokes those stories, connotes the words that characterize the man or woman, calls up praise and wonder at works completed or left incomplete. But, for most of us, many of the names will be only names. And what meaning

can unknown names have?

A great deal, I should like to say. The ritual of naming names survives on the strength of resonances hard to capture but harder to elude. We know each unknown name points to a space now empty of the person named, but full of memories and interpretations that persist and even grow in the minds of those who knew that person. There is a chastening and a satisfaction in being reminded how many scenes crowded with life in the living and in the recollection are veiled from one's vision; there is a point in reckoning undiscovered continents and counting the peopled stars.

And yet, it seems to cheat proper names of their richness to think of them only as signifiers. We know that each *X* is anything but an *X*, that each human being is a stage for unwitnessed tragedies and comedies. Proper names in logic label things that may or may not be describable in public language, language that gets its meaning from its shared applicability to groups of things and persons. But proper names also belong to language as a whole; they fill the mouth as well as other words, have specific sounds and shapes. Words, proper or improper, cannot escape from being words, cannot take refuge in the clean confines of logic. They mean not only by labeling *X*'s, but also by sounding and looking as they do, by spilling over their sensuous qualities, as do the sounds of music and the painter's shapes. What meaning beyond the reach of logic is I am not confident I can say. Proper names of people seem to have magic beyond their power of pointing out human beings. It is as if the persons whom logically the names only label took on a presence, as if in knowing nothing but their names—so long as that knowing is not too casual and unreflective—we knew something deeper of them than the causal fact they bore those names.

There are in literature important characters whose existence in the work is a name or little more. They occur in epic and chronicle, names dropped or listed, signifying people with no particular role in the story, or none worth singling out, but without the stirring names of supernumerary heroes the texture of those texts would lose weight and complexity. Catalogues must not be skipped or edited away. The Scottish ballad "Mary Hamilton"—the story of a lady-in-waiting, all-too-successfully courted, who drowns her baby and is condemned to hang—concludes with the lines:

Last nicht there was four Maries,
The nicht there'll be but three;
There was Mary Seton, and Marie Beton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me.

Does the naming of the other three Maries not somehow *make* the poem? Context can encourage us to imagine the outlines of stories about those we know only by name: Four court girls, all bearers of aristocratic Scots names, four lives one would expect

to run in similar channels. What did the three survivors have that Mary Hamilton lacked, or lack that she had? Less beauty, more resistance? Some deficit of passion or greater endowment of prudence? Some talent for ordinary living that would have disabled them, even if they had found themselves in Mary Hamilton's trouble, from being as sassy on the gallows as she, for her final speech—matter-of-fact, bitter, spirited, joking—is anything but the repentance good form might demand or the self-pity that might be natural. In naming her luckier or chaster survivors (her rivals perhaps), she triumphs over them.

One character who is mostly a name, in a very different vein of literature, has long haunted me—Ramon Fernandez in Wallace Stevens' poem "The Idea of Order at Key West." He appears about four-fifths of the way through the poem, before which one would suspect no presence save for the poet's and that of a visionary-seeming woman singing by the sea. Then suddenly Ramon Fernandez is addressed in the stanza:

Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know,
Why, when the singing ended and we turned
Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
As the night descended, tilting in the air,
Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Just following, at the very end of the poem, he is addressed again in an exclamation:

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

At his second appearance, we do discover one fact about him—he is pale. And once Ramon is present, speculation about his role is invited. With the "we" in the poem, the poet must be talking about himself and Ramon, two particular people listening to the same commingled song of the woman and the sea, complicit in their understandings and doubts. Is Ramon appealed to because he is likely to know what the poet cannot figure out, or does the poet know Ramon will be unable to tell what he is asked to tell *if* he knows? Must the poet cry out to him what their common experience means, or does this pale Spaniard have some intuitive grasp of those "ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds" that Stevens must struggle to articulate? In any event, what we know *about* Ramon—scant and speculative—has nothing like the force in the poem of his mere name—his beautiful Hispanic name. The poem could say about what it says without Ramon Fernandez, but a nearly unana-

lyzable element in the poem's mysteriousness and in the profound humanism it affirms would be lacking without the presence of a human being primarily present as a name, and I think just *that* name.

I confess a certain regret at the youthful preference in fashion now for traveling light in names. "I'm Carol," "I'm Jeff," is often as much identification as one can extract from a student, as if to reveal more were to produce cards of identity that tell the older generation more than it's safe to let Them know. And yet, this is precisely my argument—names *do* tell more than they strictly ought. But I could do with a few more syllables in introductions and self-introductions. The baggage of A. A. Milne's three-year-old is perhaps excessive—James James Morrison Morrison Weatherby George Dupree. Only royalty and its imitators in the British upper classes can get away with strings as long as that. But it seems to me we should not be shy about sounding out the two or three names that suffice for most of us, pronouncing them boldly at times between our birth certificates and our tombstones.

When one is young, one mostly is one's name. History has not had time to accumulate, character to be engraved, but the child most certainly knows who he is. Our names are our oldest and surest possessions. The child's name to the child is no empty label on an empty space, but a thing of color and sonority, an object of unexampled interest and importance. It tells all about me, and even if I am plain John Jones, when I am only three I am *the* John Jones. Proper names hold onto meaning, perhaps, because they once had so much. They join the class of favored hieroglyphs, signs that express though they do not represent, speak to the spirit though they have outlived their everyday use.

The ritual of naming names is most of all a celebration of individuality. As it is performed here, it may seem to call attention primarily to our corporate life. The dead are named according to their "orders," their particular roles in the complex and enduring career of the University, and those of us who did not know them learn from the proceedings, besides the names themselves, only their general location within a fabric that survives, where the dead are replaced in their roles and live on as examples of parts well-played. But the ritual's insistence on proper names, the way the names resound beyond the scanty information we gain about their bearers, seems to call the mind away from the secondary office of affirming a community to contemplation of the mystery of individuality. A rite of civil religion turns to true religion after all; when the just and necessary claims of the Earthly City have been satisfied, the mind is carried on the wings of those unique and resonant names to the City of God.

The God of monotheism is the final symbol of individuality. We should not look for another name for Him, because if we do we misunderstand "God"

as the word for a *kind* of thing; "God" is a proper name. God, like our individual selves, is unknowable in essence; we only know something *about* Him through His works—and universities are devoted to revealing again and again how little we know of those, how yesterday's truth fails to meet the phenomena's complexity.

For the reality back of the phenomena we have only a name. To have only a name, however, is not to be impoverished, is not the same as having, or being, only an X. Common language is made for the common uses of this world; proper names echo the depths we cannot talk about. It is as true of ordinary names—ours and those of the dead—as of the Name of God. We are images of God in that we share His individuality, cannot be plumbed or measured, cannot be reduced to roles and works, enjoy a liberty to be ourselves and to shape our world, to figure as beginnings, not merely as results of those processes of nature and history that form us.

Of his comical but apt symbol for the flesh-and-blood individual, the hippopotamus, T. S. Eliot wrote:

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,
While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

Institutions have their advantages. As Eliot says earlier in the poem:

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

But the hippopotamus has the last word, the last laugh. The University, like its ancestor the Church, does not subsume, does not explain, the individuals who have been part of it. Its debt to them is for more than the service they have rendered, each in his generation, each in her capacity; it is for having been themselves, each as he or she was, and for having touched the collective life with life from life's exclusive source in individuals.

Wallace Stevens, unlike Eliot, was not a man to spend Sunday morning in church, preferring "late coffee and oranges in a sunny chair." But in "The Idea of Order at Key West" (and elsewhere) Stevens celebrates the human voice, human freedom, the need and the power we have to transcend the givenness of nature. Of his singer he says, in the poem's opening line: "She sang beyond the genius of the sea," and adds:

It was her voice that made
The sky acutest at its vanishing.
She measured to the hour its solitude.

She was the single artificer of the world
 In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
 Whatever self it had, became the self
 That was her song, for she was the maker. Then
 we,
 As we beheld her striding there alone,
 Knew that there never was a world for her
 Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

The poem is of course about art, but it is also full of the awareness that each of us—each proper-named person, each Ramon Fernandez—is a “single artificer of the world.” It is the poet and Ramon, “when the singing ended,” who with their shaping, human, individual eyes see that the random lights from the boats:

Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
 Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
 Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

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ON THE OTHER HAND

At Stake in the Enlightenment

Peter L. Berger

Christian conservatives generally subscribe to two strongly held propositions: that a return to Christian values is necessary if the moral confusion of our time is to be overcome, and that the Enlightenment is to blame for much of the confusion.

Looked at empirically, these two propositions undoubtedly have merit. It is historically accurate to say that the morality of Western Civilization has its roots in Christianity and farther back in Judaism, and it is at least plausible to say that convinced Christians are less confused about their values than people with more shaky religious convictions. Moreover, it is safe to ascribe to the Enlightenment the origins of a process of debunking every sort of certitude that has led to the moral relativism of our present moment.

Yet things are a bit more complicated. One complication turns up as soon as one asks just which period of history and which part of the world one

wants to hold up as an example of a society in which Christian values were reasonably dominant. Presumably it would have to be a place and a period where the effects of the Enlightenment were not, or not yet, in evidence. How about central Europe in the seventeenth century?

I was made to think about this on a recent visit, my second, to a monastery of Loccum in northern Germany. It is located near Hannover, though that sizable city seems far away from the rustic tranquillity of Loccum. The monastery was founded in 1163 by a group of young Cistercians (one historian has referred to this order, in its early years, as a kind of youth movement). Like many medieval monasteries, Loccum soon acquired extensive stretches of land, including several villages, and it was also given political and legal jurisdiction over the surrounding territory. When most of northern Germany became Protestant, Loccum (along with some other places in the region) held on as a Catholic enclave, then very quietly became Protestant around 1600. It is highly unusual though not unique that there continued to be monks in residence for some time (Lutheran monks, that is) and that, when these finally disappeared, Loccum retained its status as a monastic establishment under the authority of the *Landeskirche* of Hannover—with an abbot and a chapter functioning under the old charter, though the individuals carrying on these functions were now no longer Cisterian monks but Lutheran church officials.

This status has remained intact up to the present time. The oldest part of the complex of buildings (the magnificent Romanesque church in the center dates from the thirteenth century) now serves as the seminary of the *Landeskirche* (where about-to-be-ordained pastors spend a year of practical training after completing their theological studies at a university). Clustered around it are other church institutions, including the Evangelical Academy of Loccum, one of the three most active Protestant think tanks founded after World War II. Hanns Lilje, one of the most impressive figures in the church resistance against the Nazi regime, was both *Landesbischof* and “abbot” of Loccum; he is buried there, beside all his predecessors, a line stretching back to the High Middle Ages.

On my recent visit I was again struck by the peaceful atmosphere of the place, itself a tangible sign of an unbroken history of Christian piety and thought. It was not even broken by the great chasm of the Reformation, not only in the sense that the monastery became Protestant without any sharp conflicts, but because it subsequently tried to serve as a mediator between the two religious parties. Toward the end of the seventeenth century its Abbot Molanus initiated a number of theological negotiations between Protestants and Catholics that attracted

wide attention (the philosopher Leibnitz was one of the participants). Theologically, Loccum stood for a mellow ecumenism in an era when this was hardly widespread. As my host, *Landesbischof* Horst Hirschler, showed me around, I felt soothed by the *genius loci* and I could well imagine how a young person spending a year in Loccum would be strongly shaped by the experience.

This tranquil mood ended abruptly. The *Landesbischof* showed me various old manuscripts in the monastery library, then took one out with particular care. It was a brittle-looking volume that he had accidentally come upon some years ago. The volume contained the full record of a trial for witchcraft. Bishop Hirschler was evidently moved by this discovery. He sat down and read parts of the document to me (I could not have deciphered the archaic German script by myself). Subsequently I read an account of the episode in a history of Loccum, which also contained extracts from the juridical record. But it was in handling and poring over the old book that these long-ago events seemed to come alive. It is not a pretty story.

The case was that of one Gese Koellars, a widow with several children, of the village of Wiedensahl, which was within the jurisdiction of the monastery. The case was begun in October 1659, a good half century after Loccum became Protestant. Koellars was accused by the mayor and several villagers of being a witch and of having harmed the animals of some neighbors by witchcraft. She was arrested and brought before the monastic court. She indignantly denied the accusations, pointing out (relevantly, one would think) that one of her accusers was a neighbor whose advances she had rejected. When the court (which throughout the entire trial tried, within the limits of its preconceptions, to be fair to the accused) expressed doubts about the accusations, Koellars' fellow-villagers came up with more serious allegations—that she had been responsible for the supernatural apparition of a black man, that she had hexed a child who then died, that she had kept the communion host in her mouth in order to give it to the devil. The court then asked the advice of the law faculty of the nearby university of Rinteln as to whether Koellars should now be questioned under torture. The law professors advised that this would be premature, that she should be further interrogated to see if inconsistencies appeared. None did. The next advice was to begin with the lowest form of torture, the so-

called *ligatura* or painful shackling. This was done by a professional torturer, who was specially imported for this purpose from one of the nearby towns.

The record gives a clear impression of a feisty, even belligerent woman. Koellars did not break under these ministrations; instead, she asked to be subjected to the "water ordeal" in order to prove her innocence. That, alas, was a fatal mistake. She was thrown into a pond three times, and three times, despite all her efforts, failed to sink. The record now shows shock and uncertainty in her responses. She admitted that she had failed the test, but still maintained her innocence. Surprisingly, the court, again upon advice of the law faculty, stated that there was strong suspicion but no conclusive proof of witchcraft in this case, and considered a sentence of banishment from the region. But the villagers of Wiedensahl brought forth even more accusations. Koellars was subjected to more severe torture (the application of screws to the legs).

And now the record shows that she finally broke. She confessed that she was indeed a witch, even named her diabolical lover (whom she called "bushman"). The court pronounced her guilty. The sentence was imposed by the nearest secular authority, the Count of Schaumburg, who, as an act of mercy, ordered Koellars to be beheaded rather than burned at the stake. The sentence was carried out in June 1660.

Between 1628 and 1660, thirty-two women and three men were executed for witchcraft at Loccum. Not all the records of these trials have survived, but all the names are known.

There was opposition to those trials from within both churches in Germany in the seventeenth century. The Jesuit Friedrich von Spee, who had been a prison chaplain to many accused witches, did not doubt the reality of witchcraft but denounced the trial methods in a book published in 1632. The Protestant Christian Thomasius published a more comprehensive attack on the whole practice in 1701.

But it was the Enlightenment that put an end to witchcraft trials. Enlightened rulers prohibited such trials. They also stopped the practice of judicial torture and, in some countries, abolished the death penalty.

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The Problem With Liberalism

J. Budziszewski

Believers in the congregation of my youth took for granted that Christianity and liberal politics were opposed. The Bible seemed to back them up; of Lyndon Johnson's two great wars, for instance, they viewed the first, the war in Vietnam, with enthusiasm because America was a "City upon a Hill," while viewing the other, the war on poverty, with indifference because "the poor will always be with us." An antiwar socialist, I rebelled, eventually leaving the faith completely. When in middle adulthood I returned, I found myself in a congregation of a different kind. Here, to my surprise, the believers took for granted that Christianity and liberal politics were brothers. Again Scripture was gleaned for support. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"—obvious backing for the welfare state. "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"—a manifesto for feminism. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him"—homosexual activists asked for no more. As a teenager I had hurled some of the same verses against my elders. God had devised a cunning penance.

Of course, both sides were tearing passages out of context and reading into them things that are not there. The City upon a Hill is the Body of Christ, not the United States of America. If the poor will always be with us, then we will always have to care for them. I am expected to look after the least of Christ's brethren myself, not to have the government send them checks. The apostle who said that in Him there is no male or female also said that in the family their roles are different. And the apostle who said that God is love also claimed for God the authority to define that love.

Unfortunately, knowing these things does not

answer the ideological question. Should Christians be political liberals? Or even, to put the query the other way around, Can they be?

In one way, both forms of the question are wrong-headed. According to the letter to the Philippians, our commonwealth is in Heaven, not on earth. In the same vein, the Great Commission shows that the mission of the Church to the world is to preach the gospel, not to underwrite any worldly regime or ideology. Therefore the primary identity of the Christian is in Christ—it cannot be in liberalism, any more than it can be in conservatism, communism, or communitarianism.

But to stop at this truth would be evasive. Although the faith does not mandate any worldly regime or generate any worldly ideology, it does stand in judgment upon worldly regimes and ideologies. Moreover, Scripture makes clear that so long as human institutions do not defy God's commandments, we are to submit to them. Under a monarchy, submission might mean nothing more than obedience. In a republic, however, submission includes participation, so we have no alternative but to take positions on political questions. Willy-nilly, this involves us in responding to the worldly philosophies by which other people settle such questions.

The result? Even though I am not a duck, I will sometimes seem to quack like a duck. I cannot be a liberal and I cannot even be in strategic alliance with liberals, but I may from time to time find myself in tactical alliance with them—just as with conservatives—defending the cause of particular laws, precepts, or policies that they too approve, but for reasons of their own. To keep my head, I had better be clear about what those reasons are and how they differ from mine. So although we cannot ask whether Christians can or should be political liberals, we can and should ask what Christians are to think of liberalism.

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At the threshold of the question we run into another problem. The term “political liberalism” can mean several things. In which sense are we using it here? Its principal meanings are threefold. Broadly, it means constitutional government with a representative legislature and generous liberties. In political economy, it means a competitive, self-regulating market with minimal government interference. Colloquially, it means the contemporary variety of government-driven social reformism. The first sense makes both Senator Kennedy and Speaker Gingrich liberals. The second makes the Speaker a liberal, but not the Senator. The third makes the Senator a liberal, but not the Speaker. For present purposes I use the term in the third.

My thesis is that, even as worldly philosophies go, political liberalism is deeply flawed. We may best describe it as a bundle of acute moral errors, with political consequences that grow more and more alarming as these errors are taken closer and closer to their logical conclusions. I am not speaking of such errors as celebrating sodomy and abortion—for these are merely symptoms—but of their causes. Nor am I speaking of all their causes—for this would require reading hearts—but of their intellectual causes. I am not even speaking of all their intellectual causes—for these are too numerous—but of the most obvious.

No claim is here made that every political liberal commits all the moral errors all the time. Nor do I claim that all the moral errors are logically compatible, so they even could all be committed all the time. Certain moral errors support certain others, but others are at odds, so they must be committed selectively. One must not expect logical coherence in moral confusion.

The political implications of the faith are more negative than positive, so rejecting liberalism does not mean accepting conservatism. In the first place, under the influence of a liberal culture conservatives often fall for liberal moral errors too. In the second place, like every worldly ideology conservatism commits heresies of its own. But we can study conservatism another time.

The first moral error of political liberalism is *propitiationism*. According to this notion I should do unto others as they want; according to Christianity I should do unto others as they need. Numerous mental habits contribute to the propitiationist frame of mind. Most of my college students, for instance, think “need” and “want” are just synonyms. Many also construe the Jeffersonian right to pursue happiness as a right to be made happy by the government. Propitiationism corresponds to a style of politics in which innumerable factions, both organized and unorganized, compete to become government clientele, fighting not only for shares of the public purse (such as grants and loan guarantees) but also for governmental preferences (such as trade barriers and

racial quotas) and for official marks of esteem (such as multiculturalist curricula and recognition of homosexual unions). Of course, in a representative system every government functionary, whether liberal or not, finds it difficult to resist group pressures. Propitiationism, however, reinforces the habit of giving in by making capitulation a moral duty.

Christians can slip into propitiationism by misunderstanding the Golden Rule. This happens when we read *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you* as though it implied *Do unto others as they would have you do unto them*—“I’d want others to honor my demands, so I should honor theirs.” The mistake lies in overlooking the fact that the “you” to whom the precept is addressed is a free subject of the kingdom of heaven, not a stranger. We are therefore speaking of what *in Christ* we would have others do unto us—to minister to our godly needs, not to our foolish or sinful wants. Unto others we should minister in the same way. It follows that keeping the Golden Rule may even mean saying “No” or suggesting a better way. Jesus instructs us to feed the poor, and so we should; but Paul says to the church at Thessalonica, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”

To be sure, it is easier to see the need to say “No” to a greedy industrialist who wants the government to protect him from honest competition than to a teen mother who wants to marry the government instead of a man. Both want what is bad for them, yet he is likely to get much more of what he wants but doesn’t need than she is. The sloppy sort of compassionator is tempted to say, “If he gets what isn’t good for him, then it’s only fair that she should get what isn’t good for her.” But to give it to her might be to take her sole beatitude away. Find another way to help her. Blessed are those who cannot pay the entry fee to Hell.

The second moral error of political liberalism is *expropriationism*. According to this notion I may take from others to help the needy, giving nothing of my own; according to Christianity I should give of my own to help the needy, taking from no one. We might call expropriationism the Robin Hood fallacy. Today, the expropriationist is usually a propitiationist too, confusing the needy with some subset of the merely wanty. So we are speaking of a style of politics in which the groups in power decide for us which of their causes our wealth is to support, taking that wealth by force.

Many Christians seem to miss the point, thinking that expropriation is wrong just because the wrong groups are in power, choosing the wrong causes for subsidy. This is where the horror stories are offered, and horrible they are: of subsidies to promote abortion, subsidies to photograph crucifixes in jars of urine, subsidies for all sorts of wickedness and blasphemy. But expropriation would be wrong even if

each of its causes were good. Consider the following progression.

1. On a dark street, a man draws a knife and demands my money for drugs.
2. Instead of demanding my money for drugs, he demands it for the Church.
3. Instead of being alone, he is with a bishop of the Church who acts as bagman.
4. Instead of drawing a knife, he produces a policeman who says I must do as he says.
5. Instead of meeting me on the street, he mails me his demand as an official agent of the government.

If the first is theft, it is difficult to see why the other four are not also theft. Expropriation is wrong not because its causes are wrong, but because it is a violation of the Eighth Commandment: Thou shalt not steal.

But how, one may ask, can *government* steal? We live in a republic; aren't we therefore just taking from ourselves? No, not even in a republic are the rulers identical with the ruled, nor for that matter are the ruled identical with each other; if we were just taking from ourselves, there would be no need for the taking to be enforced. Then is it wrong for government to tax at all? No, government may certainly collect taxes for the support of its proper work; that work, however, is not the support of all good causes, but merely punishing wrongdoers and commending rightdoers. So Peter teaches in his first letter (2:13-14).

If government were to end its subsidy of good causes, wouldn't these good causes suffer? Not necessarily; they might even thrive. Marvin Olasky has shown in *The Tragedy of American Compassion* that government subsidy itself can make good causes suffer, for in taking money by force one weakens both the means and the motive for people to give freely. Not only that, government usually distorts good causes in the act of taking them over. But what if the causes did depend on the proceeds of theft? Should we do evil, that good may come? When some people accused Paul of teaching this doctrine, he called the charge a slander. There is no such thing as a tame sin that will do only what we want it to, going quietly back into its bottle when we have finished with it. Sin is no more like that than God is. In politics, no less than in private life, it ramifies.

The third moral error of political liberalism is *solipsism*. According to this notion human beings make themselves, belong to themselves, and have value in and of themselves; according to Christianity they are made by God, belong to Him, and have value because they are loved by Him and made in His image. "Your eyes shall be opened," said the serpent, "and ye shall be as gods." Solipsism holds that we already are.

Political liberalism was not always solipsistic, but

the change has hardly been noticed. John Locke in 1688 and Immanuel Kant in 1797 both held that we are not to use others merely as means to our ends. And yet though one can read in many books that they were saying the same thing, Locke gives as his reason that we are here to serve God's ends, while Kant gives as his that each of us is an end himself. Locke therefore roots our dignity in God, while Kant makes us out to be gods ourselves. The two thinkers turn out to be as far apart as two thinkers can be.

Some might say the difference makes no difference; after all, Kant did reach the same conclusion as Locke, did he not? Say rather that he purported to. As we might have guessed from social conditions among the pagan deities, that is not the end of the story. Olympus was a world of irresistible forces and immovable objects. The gods deserved everything, but owed nothing. While expecting divine honors, they did whatever they could get away with. Solipsism produces the same result. Not everyone can have unconditional value, so beneath the high public language of equal concern and respect some become more equal than others. Because mothers are not to be means to their babies' survival, their babies become means to their mothers' control over their pregnancies. Because speakers are not to be means to their listeners' purity, their listeners become means to the speakers' pleasure in filth. Because patients are not to be means to the quiet of their doctors' consciences, their doctors become means to their patients' desire to die.

As surely as cider makes vinegar, solipsism made this evil. It would have done so *even if it were true* that being ends in ourselves keeps us from viewing others as means to ourselves. The mere idea of Not Using Others cannot produce a moral code, for only by the light of a moral code can we tell what counts as using others.

Christianity does not suffer from this vicious circle. Our faith takes its code from the one Who alone possesses unconditional value, yet Who sacrificed Himself that we may live, commanding that we love one another, not according to our own ideas, but as He has loved us.

The fourth moral error of political liberalism is *absolutionism*. According to this notion we cannot be blamed when we violate the moral law, either because we cannot help it, because we have no choice, or because it *is* our choice; according to Christianity we must be blamed, because we are morally responsible beings. Of course absolutionism cannot be practiced consistently, nor would it be so convenient to its practitioners if it could.

For example, a father may be absolved of child abuse because he was abused as a child himself; because of the abuse, however, the child may be absolved of murdering his father, and in this case the father is not absolved. A sodomist and a bully both

may be absolved because of predisposing factors in their family or genes, but if the bully beats the sodomist, then the sodomist is absolved but not the bully. A woman may be absolved of leaving her husband because she feels trapped in the marriage, but a man is not absolved of leaving his wife for the same reason, because that would be sexist. A young man may be absolved of smashing a brick into a person's head in the excitement of a riot, but not of doing so in the excitement of a gang war: unless the motive is political, in which case he is absolved if he is a Freedom Fighter, but not if he is a Terrorist. Finally, in a reversal of vicarious atonement, the critics of absolutism are blamed for the sins of those whom they refuse to absolve.

Nowhere does Scripture say that to know all is to forgive all. Rather it says that on the Day of Wrath, everything secret will be known and everything in darkness will come to light. Nevertheless, Christians get pulled into absolutism by all sorts of ropes. *Ours is a God of mercy.* Yes, but He is also a God of judgment. These two qualities are united by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, of which we cannot avail ourselves unless we repent. *Christ has commanded us not to judge.* Yes, but we are not commanded not to judge acts; we are only commanded not to judge souls. We know which acts are wrong because He has told us; we don't know which souls will repent because He hasn't. *God loves everyone.* Yes, and that is why He wants to save us from our sins. We are not saved by good deeds, but we are certainly saved for them. God does not overlook our wrongdoing; He forgives it when we turn in faith to Christ.

In the final analysis, absolutism is cruel, not compassionate; harsh, not lenient; malicious, not magnanimous. It speaks of mercy, but shuts out God's grace by teaching that we have no need for it. It speaks of forbearing from judgment, but its main use is to demonize class enemies. It speaks of love, but justifies evil. God forgive us for thinking there is nothing to forgive.

The fifth moral error of political liberalism is *perfectionism*. According to this notion human effort is adequate to cure human evil; according to Christianity our sin, like our guilt, can be erased only by the grace of God through faith in Christ. Perfectionists also think the cure can be completed in human time. Some even believe it can be arranged for whole societies at once. By contrast, the faith teaches that God must start over with each person, and that although guilt is erased immediately, the cure of sin is not complete until the next life.

Perfectionism is rich in consequences. The war to end all wars that ushered in a century of wars, the war on poverty that spent trillions of dollars but left poverty untouched, the war on unhappiness that enriched assorted gurus while rates of suicide soared, these are but its nuts and berries. According to the

faith, its final fruit is unending darkness. Yet though emptied of Hope, perfectionism is full of hopes. "Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement." "Humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves." "Man sets himself only such problems as he is able to solve." Statements like these were once considered extreme; the first and second are from the Humanist Manifestos, the third from Karl Marx. Yet today such sentiments are the boilerplate of liberal speechmaking. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has imagined what we can build," the current President has prophesied, misquoting Paul and Isaiah.

Christians bear some responsibility for the advent of perfectionism. For instance, today's believer does not often hear that Love is a disposition of will toward good, Faith a disposition of reason toward revealed truth, and Hope a disposition of longing toward Heaven. Once he has followed nonbelievers in using the first word for an emotion and the second for something inimical to reason, there is nothing much to stop him from using the third for complacency about the course of this present, broken world.

Other slidepaths to perfectionism are just as well traveled. Some people even think Jesus was a perfectionist; did He not urge us to be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect? But the Greek word translated "perfect," *teleioi*, means merely "complete," meaning that we are not to stop at half measures but grow up to full maturity. Thus John, who ought to have known what the Master meant, wrote in his first letter that if any man says he has no sin, he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him. Nor is perfectionism to be found in biblical prophecy. True, some Christians distort the prophecy of the millennium—the thousand-year reign of the martyrs with Christ—into the idea that worldly suffering will diminish and finally disappear through human social reform. But the text of the Revelation says nothing of such things.

One sometimes hears that perfectionism is a prerequisite for pity—as though one offers a cup of cold water to a thirsty child only because he foresees an ultimate victory in the War on Thirst. On the contrary, one takes pity for the love of souls, not for the love of abstractions; moreover, one takes it because these souls are suffering, not because he expects suffering to end. Perfectionism is more likely to annihilate pity than to heighten it. All for the sake of paradise, the tyrants of our generation stacked bodies higher than Nimrod stacked bricks; yet they came no nearer heaven than he did.

The sixth moral error of political liberalism is *universalism*. According to this notion the human race forms a harmony whose divisions are

ultimately either unreal or unimportant; according to Christianity human harmony has been shattered by sin and cannot be fully healed by any means short of conversion.

The argument that human divisions are *unreal* is usually some form of pantheism. According to the Eastern way of putting it, all is in God—the obvious consequence of which is that God includes evil. For instance, the psychiatrist Carl Jung taught that Christians are mistaken in worshiping God as Trinity. Instead they ought to worship Him as “Quaternitiy,” the fourth Person of Godhood being Satan—a dog in the manger if ever there was one. For this some praise Jung as more “spiritual” than Freud. Most Westerners, though, prefer a formula that suppresses such unsettling conclusions: not “all is in God,” but “God is in all.” Thus George Fox taught that the “light of Christ” resides within each person already. By making such divisive steps as conversion unnecessary, this would seem to hold out hopes of bringing people together; actually it makes the origin and persistence of our divisions wholly mysterious.

The argument that human divisions are *unimportant* is usually some form of myopia. In one version, everyone is just like me—my class, my set, my outlook. We may all seem to want different things, but deep down we all *really* want the same thing and seek the same God. This is the stuff of beauty pageants and Robert Fulghum books. In another version, we are all different, but that is all right because it takes all sorts. Each ingredient adds its flavor to the salad. We are the world. This is the stuff of rock telethons and multicultural curricula.

Such delusions are almost cruelly easy to explode. Did the Nazis want the same as their victims? Did they seek the same God? Did it take both sorts to make a world? Our wants are different—wealth, redemption, power, death, revenge. Our Gods are different—Yahweh, Allah, Krishna, Kali, Volk. Even our sins are different—lewdness, envy, pride, resentment, sloth. God has placed in all hearts a longing for Himself, but not every way in which we try to satisfy this longing is a search for God. A diversity of gifts has been strewn among the children of men, but not every vice or twist of the children of men is a gift. In Christ there is no slave or free, no Greek or Jew; but there are slave and free, and there are Greek and Jew.

In our time, the universalist fallacy has even given rise to a new type of professional, the “facilitator,” whose bag of tricks for uncovering supposed latent unity is more and more familiar. Some of these, like active listening and decision by consensus, can be useful at times. Others, like unconditional inclusiveness, spell disaster if taken literally. What happens when they are imposed where a basis for unity is presumed that does not in fact exist? Various things; for instance the parties may stall, fly apart, or reach conspicuous agreement about points that are not at

issue. At least these outcomes are straightforward. But just as often the technology of reconciliation becomes a technology of domination, more subtle than most, whose adepts simply bamboozle those who cannot talk the talk.

The seventh moral error of political liberalism is *neutralism*. According to this notion the virtue of tolerance requires suspending judgments about good and evil; according to Christianity it requires making judgments about good and evil. We can break neutralism into three components. According to the Quantitative Fallacy, the meaning of tolerance is tolerating; therefore, the more you tolerate, the more tolerant you are. According to the Skeptical Fallacy, the best foundation for tolerance is to avoid having strong convictions about good and evil; therefore, the more you doubt, the more tolerant you are. According to the Apologetic Fallacy, if you can't help having strong convictions the next best foundation for tolerance is refusing to express or act upon them; therefore, the more pusillanimous you are, the more tolerant you are.

Closely examined, each fallacy explodes itself. If you really believe that the meaning of tolerance is tolerating, then you ought to tolerate even intolerance. If you really believe that the best foundation for tolerance is to avoid having any strong convictions at all about right and wrong, then you shouldn't have a strong conviction that intolerance is wrong. If you really believe that when you do have strong convictions you should refuse to express or act upon them, then your tolerance should be a dead letter; it should be one of the things you are pusillanimous about.

But if consistent neutralism is self-refuting, then why is it so persistent? How is it possible for it to live on in our newspapers, on the television, in the schoolroom, and even in the pulpit? There are two main reasons for its vigor. The first reason is that it is *never* practiced consistently. Rather it is used selectively as a weapon for demoralizing Christians and other opponents. For the neutralist too has strong convictions; it's just that his convictions aren't the ones he says one shouldn't act upon. Consistent neutralism would hold that if it is intolerant to express the conviction that unborn babies should not be torn from the womb, then it is also intolerant to express the conviction that they may be torn from the womb. By contrast, selective neutralism remembers itself only long enough to condemn the defenders of life.

The second reason for the vigor of neutralism is that it encourages the illusion that we can escape from moral responsibility for our beliefs and decisions. “I am innocent of this man's blood; it is your responsibility”—in these words Pilate implied that one can authorize a wrong without taking sides. “I am neither for nor against abortion; I'm for choice”—this statement is based on the same view of responsibility as Pilate's. Indeed in trying to evade

our choices we set ourselves not only against the laws of conscience but also against the laws of logic, for between two meaningful propositions *X* and *not-X* there is no middle ground; if one is true, the other is false. Even the pagans knew that.

What then is the truth about tolerance? The meaning of this virtue is not tolerating *per se*, but tolerating what ought to be tolerated. Practicing it means putting up with just those bad things that, for the sake of some greater good, we ought to put up with. We aren't practicing the virtue when we fail to put up with bad things that we ought to put up with, such as the expression of false opinions in debate; nor are we practicing it when we do put up with bad things that we ought not to put up with, such as rape. But making such distinctions requires knowing the truth about goods, bads, and greater goods. There is nothing neutral about that. It requires that we avoid not strong convictions, but false convictions; it requires not refusing to act, but acting. As Abraham Kuyper, J. B. Phillips, and C. S. Lewis have said in nearly identical words, "There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan."

The eighth moral error of political liberalism is *collectivism*. According to this notion the state is more important to the child than the family; according to Christianity the family is more important to the child than the state. To be sure, collectivists do not usually put their point so bluntly. A good example of hypocrisy and circumlocution is found in a court case from 1980.

In that year, the Supreme Court of the state of Washington ruled that lower courts had been right in granting fifteen-year-old Sheila Sumey's request to be taken from the Sumey home and placed in another that was more to her liking. The Sumey's were not unfit, and Sheila had not been mistreated; these points were not even at issue. Under the 1977 statute, all Sheila had to do was say that she was in "conflict" with her parents, and go on saying it after state-imposed counseling had run its course. Her "conflict" was that she disagreed with her parents' rules that she stay away from drugs and dealers, abstain from sex and alcohol, and be home every night at a reasonable hour. Mr. and Mrs. Sumey called the statute unconstitutional. The court, however, defended it as a "means for providing social services to the family and nurturing the parent-child bond." The intrusion on parental rights was "minor," it declared, because Sheila would have to petition every six months if she wanted to stay away from her parents for the rest of her minority. Although "the family structure is a fundamental institution" and "parental prerogatives are entitled to considerable legal deference," these prerogatives must yield to "fundamental rights of the child or important interests of the State."

Before collectivism, our family law was based on a philosophy that ran something like this. Growing up takes time, and until the process reaches its end children are not fully capable of deciding what is best for them. Moreover, the family is a more fundamental institution than the state, based on a closer harmony of interests among its members. From these premises we may conclude that in normal families, during the period while children are growing up, their parents may be trusted to act in their best interests. It follows that the state should not intervene except on evidence that the parents are acting abusively. In other words it should confine itself to the restraint of wickedness rather than trying to absorb the functions of the family.

The regnant political class is increasingly unhappy with this approach to growing up. Implicit in the position of the Washington court is the thought that of the two human institutions, family and state, the state is the more fundamental, and that normal families are characterized by conflict rather than harmony of interests between parents and children. From these premises the court concludes that parents should not be trusted to act in their children's best interests, and that therefore the state may intervene even when there is no evidence that parents are acting abusively.

Collectivism hides in a forest of reassuring bromides. "It takes a whole village to raise a child," the secular intone; "Every child is my child," the pious drowsily respond. Of all these deceptions the language of "children's rights" is the most brilliant—and also the most daring, for in no imaginable world would children be competent to exercise their "rights" themselves. The primary decision maker in the life of a child must always be, and always is, someone else: if not parents, then the state. So, although most rights limit the reach of the government, so-called children's rights increase it. They do nothing to empower children; they only empower mandarins.

I am reminded of an election-year scuffle between a father, who was also a candidate, and a social service functionary. "No government bureaucrat could love my children as I do," the father said. "That's not true," protested the functionary, "I love them just as much." "What are their names?" asked the father.

People do wrong, and I have to do something. People are unhappy, and I have to do something. People are foolish, and I have to do something. I will absolve them. I will give them things. I will take their children. At last we come to the ninth and most mysterious moral error of political liberalism: *the fallacy of desperate gestures*. Though it mixes with all the others, it is different from each of them, different even from perfectionism, with which it is often confused. The perfectionist acts, at least in the beginning, from a desire to relieve someone else's pain.

The desperationist acts to relieve his own: the pain of pity, the pain of impotence, the pain of indignation. He is like a man who beats on a foggy television screen with a pipe wrench, not because the wrench will fix the picture but because it is handy and feels good to use.

Not long ago I sat up late listening to two friends debate. The first maintained that federal antipoverty policies were an engine of misery, which had bought off the poor with checks and coupons while undermining their families and fossilizing them in permanent dependence on the government. For a while the second denied the charge, but his denials were half-hearted and at last he conceded it. Whether the state is really doing more harm than good is not my present point; perhaps he should have held his ground. But the interesting thing is what happened next.

Having admitted that the federal antipoverty policies were doing harm, he defended them anyway. "What do you propose doing instead?" he demanded. "*Nothing?*" My other friend replied that he meant no such thing, and spoke of what people could do individually and through the churches. Friend one was contemptuous. "Government is unique," he said. "You cannot convince me that mere charity can take

its place." "I don't want it to," said friend two. "We've already agreed that government hurts instead of helping. Besides, I'm not trying to end poverty. I don't know how. I'm just trying to help where I can reach." Friend one was unmoved. "We have to do *something*," he said, and so he went on repeating.

The two friends were at cross-purposes. The rule of the first was "Do no harm, and help where possible"; of the second, "Better to harm magnificently in the name of help, than to help but a little." Not that he would have put it that way. He was medicating his pity with symbols, and the power of the drug depends on self-deception.

Here lies the power of political liberalism: Its moral errors are fortified with opiates. We may think that reality will break through the dream by itself, but reality is not self-interpreting; the causes by which errors are eventually dissipated and replaced by other errors are hidden in God's Providence. All we can do is keep up the critique which is in the gospel, and in the meantime go on being Christians: our eyes lifted up not to the spectacular idol of political salvation, but to the Cross. Let those who will call this doing nothing; we know better. F

ON THE JEWS. Our forefathers are for us not ancestors who are made the object of worship and veneration. Interest in genealogies can all too easily become mythologization, as was known already to the writers of the New Testament (1 Timothy 1:4). Our forefathers are witnesses of the entry of God into history. It is the fact of the appearance of Jesus Christ nineteen hundred years ago, a fact for which no further proof is to be sought, that directs our gaze back to the ancients and raises in our minds the question of our historical inheritance.

The historical Jesus Christ is the continuity of our history. But Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah of the Israelite-Jewish people, and for that reason the line of our forefathers goes back beyond the appearance of Jesus Christ to the people of Israel. Western history is, by God's will, indissolubly linked with the people of Israel, not only genetically but also in a genuine uninterrupted encounter. The Jew keeps open the question of Christ. He is the sign of the free mercy-choice and of the repudiating wrath of God. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Romans 11:22). An expulsion of the Jews from the West must necessarily bring with it the expulsion of Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Evangelizing Theology

Avery Dulles

It might seem paradoxical, to say the least, to describe the Catholic Church as “evangelical”—a term that is commonly taken to be practically synonymous with “Protestant” or with a particular kind of Protestant. In Germany the word *evangelisch* rather than *protestantisch* is the preferred designation for Protestant churches. In the English-speaking world, evangelicalism stems from the great revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It indicates an intense personal faith in Jesus Christ as savior and an assured sense of being saved by that faith. The term suggests an individualistic and biblically centered piety, such as that found in churches stemming from, or deeply affected by, the great revivals—notably Methodist, Baptist, and Pentecostal. (Most mainline Protestant churches have evangelical wings.) A common characteristic of evangelical churches is their strong missionary spirit.

Catholicism, by contrast, has put the accent elsewhere, on the corporate and traditional features of Christianity. The Catholic Church has been the church of organization, dogma, and sacraments. While always sponsoring missionary activity, the Catholic Church has relied chiefly on religious orders to perform this task. They were expected not so much to spread the gospel as to plant the Church in countries where it had as yet no roots.

With Vatican II a major shift took place. The Catholic Church became in a true sense evangelical. The Council spoke frequently of the gospel (in Latin, *evangelium*, 157 times) and of evangelization (31 times). It taught that every Christian has a responsibility to evangelize. Paul VI followed this up in many ways. He took the name of Paul in honor of the apostle of the Gentiles and engaged in long apostolic journeys to distant continents. At the climax of

his pontificate he called a meeting of the synod of bishops to deal with the question of evangelization, and from materials supplied by that synod he composed his great apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi* (“Evangelization in the Modern World,” 1975). In this exhortation he described evangelization as the deepest identity of the Church, which exists, as he put it, in order to evangelize.

John Paul II has carried this evangelical shift yet further. Summarizing the main orientation of his pontificate, he declared in Mexico City on May 6, 1990: “The Lord and master of history and of our destinies has wished my pontificate to be that of a pilgrim pope of evangelization, walking down the roads of the world, bringing to all peoples the message of salvation.”

Since 1983 John Paul II has repeatedly called for the commitment of all the Church’s energies to a new evangelization. As the third millennium of Christianity approaches, it is more urgent than ever, he holds, to demonstrate the importance of the Christian message for all the peoples of the world and to revitalize Christian faith in parts of the world where it has become feeble or inert.

Evangelization is not and never has been easy. Today we tend to blame the prevalent culture for our lack of success. We denounce its individualism, secularism, relativism, hedonism, and other vices—which do indeed render the environment unfriendly to the proclamation of the gospel. But we too easily overlook the deep religious hunger that continues to stir in the hearts of contemporary men and women. Discontented with a civilization of gadgets and entertainment, many are looking for some overarching meaning in life. For all its worldliness, the United States remains a remarkably religious nation—a nation, as G. K. Chesterton famously said, with the soul of a church. Many evangelically oriented sects and churches—Mormons, Adventists, Pentecostals, and Southern Baptists, for example—are winning

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enormous numbers of converts. One wonders why, with all the official encouragement given to evangelization by Vatican II and the recent popes, Catholics are for the most part ready to leave the task to Protestants, some of whom are overtly hostile to Catholicism.

The reluctance of Catholics to evangelize has many roots, historical, sociological, cultural, and political. I shall restrict my attention to the theological roots. Catholic theology, in my opinion, still lags behind the evangelical shift that has taken place on the level of the Church's pastoral leadership. The program of evangelization calls for a renewal of Catholic theology, so that it may contribute to, rather than retard, the evangelical effort.

In seeking the right principles for an evangelically oriented theology that is fully consonant with Catholic Christianity, we could not do better than to look to the New Testament. The Gospels, the Acts, and the letters of Paul are permeated by such a theology. The New Testament understands the Church as an expansive community, divinely commissioned to extend to all peoples the saving message of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the content and the principal bearer of the gospel. Dwelling in the hearts of those who are baptized into his body, and actively present in their preaching and testimony, he inwardly moves and assists the faithful to carry on his work. In biblical terms the gospel may be described as the saving power of the risen Christ, exercised in and through the Church by means of word, sacrament, and personal witness.

In Jesus person and mission are identified. His mission on earth stands in unbroken continuity with his eternal existence within the godhead. As Son he is perfectly obedient to the Father, from whom he receives all that he is and does. Sent into the world by Christ, the Church is the gathering of those who engage themselves to travel on the road marked out by him. They seek to show that he is for all humanity, as he is for the baptized, the way, the truth, and the life. Taken up into the body of Christ and directed by the Holy Spirit, Christians become bearers of the good news by their speech, their actions, and their whole mode of being. Like Jesus himself, they have an essentially missionary existence.

Building on these biblical themes, theology seeks to show the connection between the word of God and the truth that leads to salvation. As "salutary truth," the gospel rescues believers from death and gives them a share in eternal life. Taken up into the "proximity" of Christ the Redeemer, the Christian feels driven to declare by word and work the wonderful deeds of God. Because faith flowers into testimony, the theology of faith is inseparable from a theology of witness. All the truths of revelation draw their meaning and power from their relationship to Christ's redemptive action, which comes to expression in the gospel, the *evangelium*.

A theology that is both Catholic and evangelical differs from medieval Scholasticism and Counter-Reformation apologetics. These theologies contained much that is true and permanently valid; they lent themselves well to the situation of earlier centuries, when Europe was a self-contained Christian society. But they are no longer adequate for the complex global culture of our day. Medieval Scholasticism was a theology for professors and graduate students, highly speculative in its orientation. Presuming the truth of revelation and the authority of the canonical sources, it pursued subtle theoretical questions with great acumen. But, as Luther and Erasmus recognized, it did not greatly help in the business of proclaiming the gospel. The apologetically oriented theology of recent centuries, although it was more practical in orientation, was too rationalistic and ecclesiocentric to be called evangelical. The primary goal of that theology was to argue unbelievers into Catholic faith and induce a docile acceptance of "whatever the Church teaches." An evangelical theology, by contrast, seeks to reflect on the ways in which the Holy Spirit transforms the gospel into the power of salvation for all who believe.

Christian faith, understood in evangelical terms, is much more than an intellectual assent. It is a complex act involving the whole person—mind, will, and emotions. In believing I entrust myself to God as He makes Himself known by His word. Faith includes a cognitive element, for it could not arise unless one were intellectually convinced that God is, has spoken, and has said what we take to be His word. But in believing I entrust myself to this God and, if I am sincere, commit myself to live according to that word. An evangelically oriented theology will explore these various dimensions of faith.

Evangelization is not complete with the first proclamation of the gospel. It is a lifelong process of letting the gospel permeate and transform all our ideas and attitudes. Theology itself is an exercise in the process of evangelization, for it seeks to draw out the implications of the gospel for our understanding of reality as a whole.

A truly Catholic form of evangelical theology will differ not only from earlier Catholic theologies but also from its Protestant counterparts. Unlike some Protestant evangelicalism, it will not be predicated on the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. It will seek to renew the entire life of believers, of the Church, and of society itself through the leaven of the gospel. Hence it will not separate word from sacraments, or faith from works, or personal morality from social action. It will strive to regenerate the entire community of believers in the light of the gospel and to transform the larger secular society in the image of the kingdom of God.

Catholic evangelical theology will seek to distance itself from a number of crosscurrents in contemporary Catholicism. In a laudable attempt to meet the

modern mind on its own terms, Catholic theology has sometimes failed to guard sufficiently against certain deviations that inhibit a vigorous program of evangelization. Seeking to avoid the alleged triumphalism of the past, some theologians have cultivated an attitude of hypercriticism and debilitating doubt, verging on defeatism. In their efforts to recognize the failures of the Church and the truth present in other faiths, they have often tended to substitute dialogue for proclamation, and have hesitated to confront their hearers with the challenge of the gospel. In this situation we need fresh theological initiatives that pick up those themes in the New Testament and classical theology that previously undergirded evangelization. I should like to illustrate this with reference to seven trends in contemporary Catholic theology that are less than friendly to evangelization.

The first of these trends, in my enumeration, is the radical separation sometimes made between faith and belief. Some assert that faith is not a special gift of grace but a universal human quality found in different forms in all religions and ideologies. In transcendental theology, saving faith is frequently depicted as an interior orientation toward an encompassing mystery—a mystery that is inseparable from human nature itself. We are told, for example, that faith can be found in persons of any religion, and even in those who believe that they must be atheists, provided that such persons are obedient to the demands of conscience. The impression is given that all who accept themselves unconditionally, without self-rejection, and thus fulfill their primordial capacity for the transcendent, have faith in a satisfactory measure.

Faith, in this view, can exist without any definite set of beliefs, and hence without the gospel. The implication seems to be that there is no need to proclaim the gospel in order to bring people to faith. Anyone who accepts the inbuilt orientation of the human spirit to the nameless transcendent mystery is already an “anonymous Christian,” on the path of salvation. Salvation is seen as the fruit of self-acceptance rather than of obedience to an externally spoken or written word.

Indeed, one can easily find contemporary authors who deny that any specific beliefs can be matters of faith. Faith, they declare, has no object that can be expressed in propositions. All the articles of the creed and dogmas of the Church, and the gospel message itself, in their estimation, are human constructs rather than divinely revealed truths.

This thesis, I believe, is incompatible with a vigorous program of evangelization. We need to see again what seemed evident to the early Christians—that the gospel preached by the apostles and their fellow workers is the word of God, and must be received as such. Paul, for example, was able to write to the Thessalonians: “We thank God constantly for this,

that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of man but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

This Pauline teaching, which is consonant with that of the other New Testament authors and the classical theological tradition, does not require one to hold that all unevangelized peoples are consigned to eternal damnation. Indeed, the Catholic Church has repeatedly proclaimed that God puts salvation within reach of everyone. But the way in which people can be saved without hearing the gospel remains God’s secret. We may conjecture that they are saved by accepting seeds of the Word (*semina Verbi*), which the divine Sower has liberally disseminated throughout the world, far and wide. But these seeds of the word do not suffice for a mature and developed faith. They are mere hints of an answer yet to be given, and cry out for completion. The gospel message concerning the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ remains the normal path to salvation. Apart from it no one can be secure from serious error or have access to the saving truth in its fullness.

Faith, therefore, is not simply the acceptance of an inner orientation of the human spirit to some kind of absolute transcendence. As Paul put it, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes from the preaching of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Unless we are convinced of the primacy of hearing, we shall not be of service in the present call for the Church to launch a new program of evangelization.

The present reluctance to proclaim the gospel is intensified by a second theological deviation. Metaphysical agnosticism, typified in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, maintains that nothing speculatively true can be said about God, because the human mind can have assured knowledge only about phenomena—things that appear to the senses. Accepting this philosophical stance, some theologians conclude that revelation gives no genuine knowledge about God and the supernatural. Anything we say about God is taken to be a metaphor that symbolically reaches out to the encompassing mystery, which is incomprehensible and ineffable. Since metaphors are arbitrary and expendable, say these theologians, no one can be required to profess the articles of the Christian creed.

To overcome metaphysical agnosticism, which undermines the realism of faith, we need to retrieve the tried and true doctrine of analogy. When we speak of God as wise, loving, and just, or as existing in three persons, or as creating and redeeming the world, we are making statements that are literally though analogously true. These statements are not metaphorical, like the statements that God is a rock or a shield. The biblical metaphors, moreover, are themselves charged with cognitive value, and may

not be arbitrarily discarded. Bound up as they are with the word of God, they are part of the sacred heritage that is to be proclaimed to all peoples.

Faith, of course, lacks the perfect clarity of direct vision. There is a sense, of course, in which God remains hidden from us so long as we are in this life. Because God dwells in inaccessible light (1 Timothy 6:16), we know Him only obscurely, as reflected in the mirror of faith (1 Corinthians 13:12). But, thanks to Christ and the Holy Spirit, we do know Him. Faith in the biblical and Christian sense of the word has never been a mere experience of the ineffable. Paul did speak of a mystical encounter in which he was "caught up into the third heaven" and heard things that cannot be told (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). But this was not the gospel he proposed for the faith of his communities. Convinced of the intelligibility of the Christian message, he could write: "Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

A third obstacle to evangelization is a kind of religious pragmatism that is rarely formulated in explicit statements but is implicit in much contemporary religious literature. Faith is esteemed not because it is true but because it leads to desirable effects, whether personal or social. We are told, for example, that faith leads to peace of mind, psychological balance, success in business, social progress, or liberation of the oppressed. On this view it makes little difference whether the God in whom one believes is a reality or a fiction. The saving effects are regarded as coming not from God but from belief itself.

The biblical authors and classical theologians would heartily agree that faith normally brings with it many psychological and social benefits. But these are not the heart of the matter. For them it is essential that faith be true, for it gets its saving power from its reliance on the only power that can effectively vanquish the destructive forces of sin and death. Faith, in other words, saves by reason of its object. If we were not convinced that salvation comes from the God who speaks His saving word in Christ, we could perhaps be good therapists or social engineers but not evangelists.

A fourth enemy of evangelization is the reigning cultural relativism. In many circles today it is almost a dogma that no dogma can be valid cross-culturally. Since cultures are tied to their time and place, the Christian message—it is claimed—has to be radically reconstructed for every region and every generation. To proclaim the doctrines of the New Testament and the creeds is often denigrated as a form of cultural imperialism. In particular the dogmas of the ancient councils and of the Catholic

Church are dismissed as sedimentations of a Greco-Roman culture that must be consigned to the ash heap of history. If the old dogmas have any value, it is to stimulate us to concoct new dogmas appropriate to our own age.

In my judgment, this cultural and historical relativism is itself behind the times. It ignores the fact that the world is becoming a global village in which ideas and attitudes travel with the speed of light. Since every idea is received according to the condition of the recipient, adaptations will inevitably occur. But truth, whether in science or religion, transcends all cultural barriers. Any true statement, properly understood, is true everywhere and always. In any great religion, such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam, there will be constants, and indeed the very value of the religion depends upon its capacity to transcend the fads and fashions of the day. A totally ephemeral religion might capture momentary interest but would not long hold the allegiance of its members.

Biblical and traditional Christianity has never been bound to a particular culture. In Christ there is no East or West. He is to be worshiped by Jews and Gentiles, by barbarians and Greeks. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and his gospel is eternal.

Modern ethnology places increasing emphasis on anthropological constants, which make it possible for people to appreciate the cultural achievements of civilizations remote from their own. The writings of ancient authors such as Plato, Virgil, and Cicero are not unintelligible to modern Americans. Indeed, they are often more intelligible to us than the works of twentieth-century philosophers such as Whitehead, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger. For the same reason it is easier to proclaim the gospel in the relatively simple language of the New Testament and the early creeds than in the involved rhetoric of some contemporary theologians who offer new and original confessions of faith.

What is correct in the recent approach is the recognition that the human mind formulates revealed truth in concepts and language that are historically conditioned. The manner of expression must be adapted to different audiences, as Paul recognized when he said that he became a Jew to Jews and a Greek to Greeks in order to win them to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). But the truth of the gospel does not change. Paul invoked an anathema on anyone who would try to preach a different gospel than that which he had received and handed on (Galatians 1:8-9).

Connected with the cultural relativism of the day is a fifth deviation: religious pluralism. If truth is "polymorphic," in the sense that it varies from race to race and from age to age, it would seem that Christianity cannot be proclaimed in new times and places. In an extreme form this relativism leads to the

conclusion that every people should have its own religion. Under the rubric of "soteriological pluralism" some modern theologians deny that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Each religion is said to have its own way of salvation, its own myths, and very often its own savior figures. Christians may believe in Jesus as their savior provided that they are ready to allow other races to worship other savior figures, such as the Lord Krishna and the Lord Buddha. The saving power of any such figure is thought to consist in its mythic impact on the psyche of the believer rather than the actual mediation of the person believed in.

This soteriological pluralism, which is patently antithetical to any program of evangelization, can seem very appealing in an age when we are reacting against the so-called Eurocentrism of past centuries and discovering the great and ancient religions of nonbiblical peoples. But religious pluralism is not a new proposal. The attitude was rampant in the world into which Christianity was born. If the early Christians had been willing to include Christ in the pantheon of deities worshiped by the pagans, the martyrs would never have gone to their deaths, but the pagan world would never have been converted. The Roman senator Symmachus argued that religious truth had to be approached through a variety of faiths, but his views were vigorously repudiated by theologians such as Ambrose. As Paul had already declared in his diatribe against idolatry, the pagans have many gods and many lords, but Christians acknowledge only one God, the Father of all, and one Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:4-6). Christianity stands or falls with the affirmation that, as there is but one God, so too there is but one name under heaven by whom one can be saved (Acts 4:12); for there is only one Mediator of salvation, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). To proclaim the gospel is necessarily to proclaim that Jesus Christ alone is Lord.

A sixth obstacle to evangelization is the false concept of freedom that pervades contemporary culture and frequently infects theologians. In the individualistic climate of our day, freedom is understood as the ability to choose whatever one pleases. Freedom of religion consequently means the capacity to choose whatever religion or lack of religion one wishes. This view has gained momentum as a reaction to situations in which the religion of the individual was made to depend almost totally upon the society into which one was born. In some countries the control of religion was handed over to the rulers of the state, according to the axiom that the religion of the ruler is that of the people: *cuius regio eius religio*.

With the Enlightenment, the state ceased to favor any particular religion. For the past three hundred years the political and social supports for religion have been crumbling. Ideological liberals seek to carry this secularization into the whole of public life,

making faith a purely private matter to be settled in the intimacy of one's own conscience. On the theory that religion should always be a matter of personal choice, parents sometimes refrain from raising their children in a definite faith. For teachers or others to manifest their faith, or to pray in public, is today deplored as a form of proselytism. Evangelization is thus made socially unacceptable and in some circumstances illegal.

Theology should resist this privatization of religion. In the absence of favorable influences from parents, teachers, and the social environment, few persons will find their way to a strong personal faith. Evangelization, to be sure, should not be done in an aggressive way that interferes with the religious freedom of the hearer, but, when properly carried out, it can actually enhance that freedom. By presenting Christian faith as an inspiring, coherent, and credible option, it gives people the freedom to consider and adopt a faith that might otherwise elude them.

If faith were nothing more than a human opinion, and if it had no real consequences for salvation, there might be good reasons for telling people to follow their own inclination about whether they wanted to believe or not. But Christians are convinced that their faith is true, that it is revealed by God, and that God wants all men and women to come to knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). For this reason every believer has a duty to try to share the faith. We cannot compel people to believe, and should not try to do so, but there is every reason for helping people to come to a willing and responsible decision of faith. In the absence of truth, freedom is greatly diminished. As the Gospels tell us, the truth will make us free (John 8:32). Christ frees us from the slavery of sin and error and leads us into "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). A correct theological notion of freedom can overcome the privatist individualism that today inhibits the task of evangelization.

Closely connected with this false concept of freedom is a seventh and final aberration, an anti-authoritarianism that militates against evangelization, especially in its Catholic form. In the current climate institutions are usually objects of suspicion. Regarding the Catholic Church as a vast and highly organized institution, many of our contemporaries feel reluctant to place their trust in it. In practice, however, those who reject religious authority usually adopt some other authority, often unconsciously and uncritically. In rejecting the authority of revealed religion, they are generally submitting to the authority of the secularist opposition, which has its own institutions and promotional organs. Because truth in religious matters is hard to come by, the choice of a faith is almost inevitably a choice among rival authorities.

The rejection of authority is more often a sign of

adolescent rebellion than of maturity. As we mature, we learn to distinguish between reliable and unreliable authorities, and to make a discriminating use of authority, but not to dispense with all authority. St. Thomas says very wisely that whereas arguments from merely human authority are weaker than rational demonstrations, arguments from the authority of divine revelation give the strongest possible grounds for assent.

Theologians themselves are sometimes overly suspicious of ecclesiastical authority. This seems to be a hazard of their profession. Whenever a new pronouncement comes from the Holy See, theologians feel called upon to judge whether it is right or wrong. I confess that I do not think it is my function to judge the authorities whom God has set over the Church. They have the commission and the charisms to safeguard the transmission of the faith. It is for them to judge theology, not to be judged by it. As a theologian I am grateful that there is someone to correct me.

And yet evangelizers should not appeal, purely and simply, to the teaching authority of the Church. In an age suspicious of institutions, we shall do well to emphasize, as Paul and John did, the joy and freedom that come from a personal relationship to Christ. In comparison with Christ the ecclesiastical institutions are mere means. The spoken and written word of God can mediate faith, but faith goes out beyond the words to submit to the person of the revealer. An evangelically renewed Catholicism will seek to show that the entire apparatus of Catholicism, including the hierarchical ministry, the proclaimed word, and the sacraments, has value because and insofar as it gives more adequate and authentic access to the God who comes to us in Jesus Christ.

Christ and his gospel must be proclaimed, in season and out of season. Evangelization is the primary and essential task of the Church. Those who have been successfully evangelized find their home in the Church as the place in which their relationship to Christ can be fully lived out. Through its ministries and sacraments they have continually new access to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the living Christ.

In the last analysis it is not individual Christians or even the Church that proclaims Christ. According to a sounder theology of evangelization, Christ proclaims the gospel through the Church and its members. The Holy Spirit is the transcendent agent of evangelization. We strive to be obedient instruments. Since we cannot cause anyone to believe, we must accompany our efforts with prayer that God will bestow the grace of faith upon those to whom the gospel message is proclaimed.

Seeing itself as addressed by the call of recent popes for a new evangelization, contemporary theology can profit from the present moment as a season of grace. Directing its critical scrutiny upon itself, theology should be alert to root out any tendencies it may have had that stand in the way of evangelization. In becoming authentically evangelical, theology can better achieve its own objective, which is to understand and serve the faith that comes through Christ and the apostles. By opening itself more fully to the word of God, it can assist the Church to adhere to that word more faithfully and proclaim it more effectively, so that the whole world, in the words of Vatican II, "by hearing the message of salvation, may believe, and by believing may hope, and by hoping may love." F

ON NATURAL RELATIONS. The fact that it is at all possible to injure the natural is adequately explained by the relative liberty of the preserved life. In the abuse of this relative liberty some given entity within the fallen world posits itself as an absolute, declares itself to be the source of the natural, and thereby disintegrates the natural life. There now begins a struggle between the unnatural and the natural, in which the unnatural may for a time forcibly prevail, for the unnatural consists essentially in organization, and the natural cannot be organized but is simply there. It is possible, for example, to organize the undermining of children's respect for their parents, but respect for parents itself is simply practiced and cannot by its very nature be organized. For this reason the natural may be temporarily overcome by the unnatural. But in the long run every organization collapses, and the natural endures and prevails by its own inherent strength; for life itself is on the side of the natural. In the meanwhile, however, there may indeed have occurred serious disturbances and revolutionary changes in the external forms of life. But, so long as life continues, the natural will always reassert itself.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Medicalizing Abortion Decisions

Thomas Murphy Goodwin

Moral decisions related to medical matters require the unbiased representations of competent medical authority. Information may come from the scientific literature or from individual physicians directly involved in a given case or acting as consultants. But in every case, suitable moral analysis requires a firm base of unbiased scientific data.

Despite a common perception to the contrary, the scientific domain of medicine is as subject to bias as any other domain. Indeed, much of the emphasis in clinical research in recent years has been directed toward standardizing study design to remove bias in clinical investigation. But there are certain sources of systematic bias in the medical community that influence the ability to pose moral questions fairly and have far-reaching consequences for all who come in contact with the medical establishment. One particular source of bias arises from merging the legal and political dimensions of the abortion debate into medical judgment and decision-making.

My practice and clinical research are in a subspecialty of obstetrics and gynecology, maternal fetal medicine, which concerns pregnancies complicated by maternal or fetal disease. There are few situations more daunting to those who advocate a consistent ethic of life than the circumstance in which the life of the mother is threatened by the continuation of the pregnancy. Although I do not acknowledge this conflict as justifying abortion, even the most dedicated of advocates for the life of the unborn are awed by this dilemma. Indeed, the power of this image has been one of the principal forces advancing the abortion

movement in the United States and elsewhere. What do we know about it objectively?

Certain conditions that can be diagnosed in advance are associated with risk of maternal mortality greater than 20 percent: pulmonary hypertension (primary or Eisenmenger's syndrome), Marfan's syndrome with aortic root involvement, complicated coarctation of the aorta, and, possibly, peripartum cardiomyopathy with residual dysfunction. Taken altogether, abortions performed for these conditions make up a barely calculable fraction of the total abortions performed in the United States, but they are extremely important because they have been used to validate the idea of abortion as a whole. They stand as a sign that abortion is in some cases unavoidable—that it can be the fulfillment of the good and natural desire of the mother to live.

It should be emphasized how rare these conditions are. Our obstetric service in the Los Angeles area has been the largest in the United States for most of the last fifteen years, averaging fifteen thousand to sixteen thousand births per year. Our institution serves a catchment for all high-risk deliveries in an area with thirty thousand deliveries per year. Excluding cases that have been diagnosed late in pregnancy, we do not see more than one or two cases per year that pose this degree of risk of maternal mortality; these are exceedingly rare conditions. This rarity does not diminish the tragic dimension of such cases, but the cases are seen in perspective when their numbers are compared to the total number of abortions performed.

If we examine other conditions associated with lesser though still significant risk of maternal mortality (conditions for which abortion is often recommended), we find that in many cases the prognoses are changing, both because of a better understanding of the natural history of the disease and because of advances in therapy. Here is the paradox, however. As the actual risks to the mother diminish because of

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medical advances, concern about maternal and fetal risks from complications of pregnancy is still offered as a justification for many abortions. From the case histories that follow, the distorted milieu of medical practice into which most pregnant women now enter can be shown.

Case #1

A twenty-one-year-old woman in her nineteenth week of pregnancy was referred for "immediate abortion." She had complained of shortness of breath and a full evaluation revealed a complex maternal congenital heart lesion, tetralogy of Fallot. This is a lesion frequently listed as a contraindication to pregnancy because of increased risk of maternal mortality. The senior house officer coordinating the abortion asked for a second opinion from our high risk clinic because the patient was distraught over the recommendation. Despite having been told that she had a significantly increased chance of dying if she remained pregnant, she had not reconciled herself to the abortion.

Repeat evaluation confirmed the diagnosis but showed that the particular manifestations of the condition in this patient were such that she could be expected to tolerate pregnancy without difficulty. She was a "pink tet," tetralogy of Fallot in which the patient is still receiving adequate oxygen. This could have been determined by the referring physician. As it was, the patient very nearly underwent an abortion for a non-indication. The patient delivered without significant complications following induction of labor in her thirty-eighth week of pregnancy.

Case #2

A twenty-five-year-old woman in the twelfth week of her first pregnancy had shortness of breath and was found to have severe narrowing of one of the valves of the heart, mitral stenosis. Her physician recommended abortion and asked for confirmation of his decision in a phone conversation. We suggested that the patient be offered the opportunity to discuss balloon valve repair during pregnancy with a cardiologist skilled in that technique. We provided references showing that this could be accomplished safely in pregnancy. Her physician expressed concern about his liability if there were any abnormality of maternal or fetal outcome. "She's young," he said. "She can have the valve repaired and try again." The patient was never referred for formal consultation.

Case #3

A thirty-eight-year-old woman was referred to us by her pastor. She was eleven weeks pregnant and was found to have breast cancer with spread to the regional lymph nodes. She was told that, for the

best chance of long-term survival, she should undergo chemotherapy, but that the pregnancy should be terminated first. She was told that her prognosis would be worse if she remained pregnant and that the chemotherapy would definitely harm her baby. Her abortion had been scheduled.

We discussed with her published evidence that breast cancer is not affected by pregnancy and that the chemotherapy regimen required for her condition is apparently well-tolerated by the fetus. The experience with any given chemotherapy regimen is limited, and we were frank with the patient that there were open questions about long-term effects. When her physician was informed of the patient's desire to undergo chemotherapy and continue the pregnancy, he suggested that we take care of her and accept the liability.

The patient underwent chemotherapy (Adriamycin and Cytosan) and delivered a baby boy who appeared entirely normal at birth. That many chemotherapy regimens can be continued without apparent ill-effect in pregnancy is information readily available to any interested physician, but the patient was not informed.

Case #4

A twenty-year-old woman in the eighteenth week of her first pregnancy arrived with severe renal disease that appeared to be due to new onset of systemic lupus erythematosus. The first consultant recommended abortion for her own health and out of concern that the medication required to control her disease might injure her fetus. The patient was anxious not to abort. We were able to tell her that although the chance of successful pregnancy outcome was low, abortion would not predictably affect the course of the disease. We discussed the considerable experience available with the medications she would require (principally steroids) and the fact that there were no apparent serious fetal effects related to this type of treatment. The patient elected to continue her pregnancy.

Subsequently, a kidney consultant recommended kidney biopsy as part of efforts to confirm the diagnosis—but not until after an abortion. We presented data showing that renal biopsy can be accomplished safely in pregnancy and that the need for this test should not be considered an indication for abortion.

Finally, the patient required a lengthy procedure under X-ray fluoroscopy. The radiologist recommended abortion because of significant X-ray exposure. After consultation with the radiation physicist, however, it was clear that the actual X-ray exposure to the fetus in this case posed no significant risk. The patient ultimately delivered a premature infant at twenty-seven weeks gestation. The child did well for one week until dying, suddenly, of an overwhelming infection.

Case #5

A thirty-two-year-old nurse had herself tested for cytomegalovirus in the seventh week of her pregnancy. This is a type of virus known to be capable of crossing the placenta and infecting the fetus, sometimes resulting in retardation and multi-organ system disease, especially if the infection has occurred for the first time in pregnancy. The results of her testing profile suggested a recent infection, indicating that her baby could be infected. She was advised to terminate the pregnancy and had made plans to do so, although with great regret. Her doctor stated that he had confirmed his recommendations with a "high-risk pregnancy specialist."

She was referred to us by a neighbor who was a physician. On initial review of the tests, it did appear that there had been an acute infection during pregnancy. We presented the patient with data that the likelihood of her child being seriously affected was only four in a hundred, with half of these suffering only isolated hearing loss. She was stunned and relieved to learn that the risk was no greater. As it turned out, a more specific indicator of infection (which we recommended be checked before any decision be made) revealed that there had been no infection at all. She delivered a healthy boy at term. She refers frequently to her "miracle baby," a pathetic reflection of the circumstances that nearly took the baby from her.

All this patient received from us was an accurate assessment of the risk to her child. And that was enough for her to continue the pregnancy, even before she learned that there had been no infection. It might not have been for the next woman. In fact, the same woman could have had an abortion for any reason at all the next day. *But it would not have been under the pretense of a medical indication.* One goal of our clinic is simply to restore a rational medical assessment to these issues. A strict focus on the justification for abortion draws attention to the way in which medical judgment has been vitiated.

The recommendations for abortion in this and the earlier cases were partly the result of ignorance of the data, but also of something else—a belief that it is better to err on the side of abortion if there are doubts about the effect of the pregnancy on maternal or fetal outcome.

These cases are just some that we have seen in the last year. They include only women who, usually because of their own convictions, could not easily accept the recommendation for abortion and sought more information. There is no doubt that many others have received such recommendations and proceeded to abort simply on the basis of the doctor's authority.

But the significance of these cases is not in the stories themselves, however disturbing they may be. The

cases are insignificant compared with the total number of abortions, and the ethical dilemma in such cases is commonly understood in a context that accepts that abortion would indeed be appropriate were there a significant risk to the mother or were the fetus seriously malformed. The real significance of these cases is in what they reveal about the attitudes of the physicians these women first encountered.

Why are physicians not providing readily available information that could affect their patients' judgment regarding abortion? I believe that there are two related reasons for this phenomenon and that they go much deeper than simple ignorance of the facts. One is the transference of an ambivalent attitude toward the developing human (virtually codified in *Roe v. Wade*) into the medical arena. Since the fetus can be aborted for any reason, the physician may see fit to suggest or recommend abortion for almost any reason.

The basis for this attitude is closely linked to a second concern: the unbalanced legal burden of informed consent. When a mother has a major medical problem in pregnancy (or indeed any medical problem), the medical record must reflect the patient's informed consent to continue with the pregnancy despite the risks. If doctors fail to disclose those risks, they are negligent because the patient could have chosen abortion as a different course of treatment. To compound the problem for the physician, there are no clear legal guidelines to determine which risks do not warrant communication to the patient. A fact is considered to be material if a reasonable, prudent person in the position of the patient would attach significance to it in deciding whether or not to submit to the proposed treatment. The accurate assessment of the risks in a given case can be a tedious process. Should any untoward outcome result from the pregnancy, the record will be scrutinized intensely. No method of documentation is watertight.

The doctor's alternative—to suggest or recommend that abortion is the safest route—carries no such legal liability. There does not appear to be a legal precedent for a physician's liability in a case where abortion was recommended on supposed medical grounds that were subsequently found to be baseless or misrepresented.

With regard to fetal abnormalities, the burden is equally one-sided and even more clearly delineated in law. Physicians have legal and, some would say, ethical duties to inform pregnant women of prenatal tests that would affect their willingness to continue the pregnancy. The concept of "wrongful birth" in law establishes that failure to inform of tests that are widely accepted in the medical community as part of the standard of care could lead to legal liability. The related concept of "wrongful life," although less commonly invoked legally, is instructive for discovering the idea behind the law. In such cases, the child

brings suit, claiming that it would be better not to have been born than to have been born with defects.

The concept of informed consent, simple in theory, is almost impossible in practice. For many physicians it translates into simply recommending every possible test and erring on the side of suggesting abortion whenever there is a question of risk to the mother or child. There is a tremendous imbalance between the liability involved in not informing the mother of risks compared to the liability of suggesting the alternative of abortion. All pregnant women, no matter what their personal convictions, are subject to the effects of this imbalance.

Real or even perceived risk to the mother or child is actually relatively infrequent. Much more common in practice is the situation in which a presumably healthy mother and fetus are offered screening tests in the hopes of identifying congenital anomalies of the fetus. Maternal serum alphafetoprotein (MSAFP) screening, capable of identifying fetuses with neural tube defects or Down's syndrome, was introduced in the early 1980s. Its place in practice was virtually mandated by the 1985 liability alert from the American College of Obstetricians and

Gynecologists, a direct response to the perceived liability from wrongful birth. Every physician must inform patients about these tests or be liable for the results. The patient may refuse the test, but usually must make a positive statement to that effect. The inescapable implication is that the woman who refuses the test is outside the norm.

More recently, various tests of maternal blood designed to identify fetal Down's syndrome have been introduced into clinical practice. The number of tests on the horizon that will allow identification of other fetal abnormalities appears limitless. The ineluctable logic of these legal precedents affects every pregnant woman and her child. No matter what the personal convictions of the mother, she must receive her care in a system in which every possible problem of maternal or fetal well-being is a test of whether the pregnancy will be allowed to continue. And in that balance, the developing human has little or no value. There is no counterweight to "wrongful birth." There is no "wrongful abortion."

Although few women may actually abort because of this bias, many will learn the lesson: that a new human being is accepted conditionally, one test at a time. ET

ON ABORTION. Marriage involves acknowledgment of the right of life that is to come into being, a right which is not subject to the disposal of the married couple. Unless this right is acknowledged as a matter of principle, marriage ceases to be marriage and becomes a mere liaison. Acknowledgment of this right means making way for the free creative power of God which can cause new life to proceed from this marriage according to His will. Destruction of the embryo in the mother's womb is a violation of the right to live which God has bestowed upon this nascent life. To raise the question whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The simple fact is that God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life. And that is nothing but murder. A great many different motives may lead to an action of this kind; indeed in cases where it is an act of despair, performed in circumstances of extreme human or economic destitution and misery, the guilt may often lie rather with the community than with the individual. Precisely in this connection money may conceal many a wanton deed, while the poor man's more reluctant lapse may far more easily be disclosed. All these considerations must no doubt have a quite decisive influence on our personal and pastoral attitude towards the person concerned, but they cannot in any way alter the fact of murder.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The Catholic Luther

David S. Yeago

I

Ecumenical skeptics today often argue that presumed doctrinal convergence between Protestants and Roman Catholics only papers over an underlying—and fundamental—disagreement. Typically, Martin Luther is called on as the prime witness to this contention: did not the Reformation schism begin with his theological “breakthrough,” his principaled repudiation of the “catholic” form of Christianity as a whole? A careful examination of what Luther actually wrote and said, however, suggests very different conclusions that may surprise Protestants and Roman Catholics alike.

In what might be called the standard Protestant reading, the young Luther was a man haunted by a question for which traditional Catholicism could provide no answer: *How can I get a gracious God?* This question arose from Luther’s deep religious or existential insight into the inauthenticity of all human works before God—an inauthenticity systematically denied by the sacramental rituals, dogmatic faith, and mystical aspiration of traditional Christianity.

Some scholars believe that Luther found his distinctive answer to this question very early and that his development as a theologian was mostly a matter of bringing his discovery to clear enough expression that it finally provoked its inevitable conflict. Since the Second World War, however, most scholars have come to believe that Luther found the answer only in 1518, after the indulgence controversy was already underway. Luther’s struggle with the question *How can I get a gracious God?* already strikes at the roots of traditional Christianity, and his persistence in asking it was enough to cause his early difficulties with the Church authorities. But it is only in 1518—when he met with the papal legate Cajetan and refused to recant—that the handwriting was on the wall; Luther could no longer live in the house of Catholic tradition.

The scholars who see something decisive happening to Luther’s thought in 1518 seem to me to have the best of it. But in either account, Luther’s “Reforma-

tion Breakthrough” is implicitly construed as a refounding of Christianity, on a par in important respects with Pentecost. Most interpreters of Luther would not feel comfortable saying this in so many words, but it is clearly implied by the story they tell. Luther is, for example, said to have “rediscovered the gospel,” which surely implies that the gospel somehow got lost. And what is the revelation of the gospel if not the founding of Christianity and of the Church?

The Protestant reading of Luther’s story implies further that Luther has no significant relation to the preceding Christian tradition: Luther’s breakthrough came about in an ahistorical, unmediated encounter with the naked Pauline *kerygma*. Luther is read as saying something radically incompatible with anything said in the Church since the death of Paul (except perhaps for a few glimmers in Augustine). The Catholic tradition figures in the story only as what Luther had to overcome to rediscover the gospel. Those concerned with Luther thus have little reason for concern with tradition, which—as “scholasticism,” “mysticism,” or “traditional dogma”—serves mostly as a foil for Luther’s “discovery.”

A final implication of this way of reading Luther is the most important and the most troubling: the sixteenth-century Protestant/Catholic schism is construed as the logical, inevitable, and necessary public outcome of Luther’s theological development. If even Luther’s question was impossible for traditional Christianity to assimilate, much less his answer, obviously his new faith demanded a new church. No ecumenical courtesy can change the fact that, on this reading of Luther, the two parties to the schism were, in effect, practicing different religions. This way of telling Luther’s story is quite conservative in its effects, even though it presents Luther as a radical, for it makes the present division of the Church seem normal and inevitable to us.

The reading of Luther that I propose tells quite a different story. While something important for Luther’s theological development did occur in 1518, it was not a “Reformation turn” away from the catholic tradition. On the contrary, it is better described as a “catholic turn” that anchored Luther’s work much more solidly within the framework of catholic Christianity. Luther’s theology was deeply shaped by his scholastic, monastic, and patristic pre-

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decessors; he was creative, but his creativity lay especially in his fresh grasp of traditional problems and in his innovative use of traditional resources to address those problems.

Of course, if all this is so, we are no longer able to suppose that the Reformers discovered a radically new version of Christianity for which the old Church could not make room. On the reading I propose, the Reformation schism was brought about instead by contingent human choices in a confused historical context defined less by clear and principled theological argument (though that of course was present) than by a peculiar and distinctively sixteenth-century combination of overheated and ever-escalating polemics, cold-blooded *Realpolitik*, and fervid apocalyptic dreaming.

II

If one looks carefully at what Luther actually wrote before 1518 (as distinguished from his reminiscences twenty or twenty-five years later), one discovers that the celebrated question *How can I get a gracious God?* is conspicuously absent. That is to say, the driving issue in Luther's early theology was not, on the face of it, the problem of the assurance of forgiveness or the certitude of salvation.

There was, to be sure, a pastoral problem of the "troubled conscience" in the late medieval Church, brought about—to oversimplify—by the convergence of certain unresolved issues in Augustine's theology of grace with certain developments in the canon law of penance. But the "troubled conscience" was never a simple and uniform spiritual malaise, and it took different forms in different pastoral and theological contexts. The young Luther did almost certainly suffer from a "troubled conscience" in some form, but it evidently did not cause his theological work to be dominated by the question, "How can I get a gracious God?"

The driving question in Luther's early theology is, in fact, "Where can I find the *real* God?" All the evidence in the texts suggests that it was the threat of idolatry, not a craving for assurance of forgiveness, that troubled Luther's conscience. And this question did not, as some of Luther's interpreters have been eager to believe, burst the framework of traditional Christianity; both the question and Luther's eventual answer locate him within the catholic tradition.

At its heart, Luther's early theology is marked by a strong emphasis on what the scholastics called *uncreated grace*, grace as the presence of the uncreated God, and on the transformation of the human heart by God in the utter transcendence of His Godhead. Much of Luther's criticism focused on the way in which contemporary theology naturalized grace, playing down its radically transformative and inevitably disruptive impact. In this, Luther was not breaking with catholic tradition, but self-consciously retrieving the tradition, bringing to bear the deepest

insights of Augustine and the great monastic teachers on a scholasticism out of touch with its own roots.

The effect of such radically transformative grace, according to the Augustinian tradition and the young Luther, is that the heart loves God above all things for His own sake; in Augustine's terms, we come to enjoy God and use created things for God's sake, rather than attempting to "use" God for the sake of created enjoyments.

Augustinian theologies of this sort regularly yield a potentially tormenting existential problem concerning the authenticity of spiritual experience. I have, perhaps, undergone a profound experience of conversion and transformation; but can I be sure that it is really the very presence of God's Holy Spirit that I have experienced? And even if I have genuinely experienced God's grace, the moment I begin to regard grace as something I can use, I have turned from God and substituted an idol of my own making. The problem of the "pure love of God" and the problem of identifying and turning to the real God turn out to be the same problem.

Luther was intensely aware of the traditional Augustinian dialectics of this problem, and works them out with great care in the *Lectures on Romans* (1515-1516). Best known is his depiction of the sinner as *incurvatus in se*, "curved in on self": "Our nature, by the corruption of the first sin, is so deeply curved in on itself that it not only bends the best gifts of God towards itself and enjoys them (as is plain in the works-righteous and hypocrites), or rather even uses God himself in order to attain these gifts, but it also fails to realize that it so wickedly, curvally, and viciously seeks all things, even God, for its own sake."

Luther's first strategy for addressing this problem of idolatrous self-seeking, first developed in the *Lectures on Romans*, uses what might be called a strategy of contrariety. It is a very specific, very simple, and quite perversely brilliant theological move. How can we tell that we are really clinging to God and not to an idol of our own? Luther answers that the gracious presence of the true God is so excruciatingly painful and distastefully unpalatable to our nature that we can have no imaginable self-interested motivation for enduring it.

Therefore the excellent God, after He has justified and given His spiritual gifts, lest that ungodly nature rush upon them to enjoy them (for they are very lovely and powerfully incite to enjoyment), immediately brings tribulation, exercises, and examines, lest the person perish eternally by such ignorance. For thus a person learns to love and worship God purely, when one worships God not for the sake of His grace and gifts, but for Himself alone.

The problem is that we do not want to come into God's presence for God's sake, but for the sake of all

the good things He can do for us: we want to use God. And Luther answers: If it is really God, then He will crucify and torture you as He did Christ, your pattern, and thus leave you no reason to cling to Him except for His own sweet sake.

It has sometimes been assumed that this theology, and the piety of humble submission to spiritual suffering that accompanies it, must have been so tormenting that it only added fuel to Luther's spiritual agony and his quest for a gracious God. But there is little warrant for this in the texts. On the contrary, Luther seems to have found it comforting. Even though it forbids the undialectical confidence in God's mercy that Luther later came to teach, it nonetheless allows the sinner yearning for God under the cross a sort of paradoxical assurance, a sense of being at least in the appropriate place before God, which sustains the heart and enables it to endure to the end. In a sort of "trusting despair," *fiducialis desperatio*, the sinner afflicted by grace discerns in his afflictions the saving hand of God, whose redemptive love secures itself from abuse by hiding under its apparent opposite. There is no real evidence that Luther regarded this consolation as inadequate; the impetus to reshape his thought in a new configuration came from the theological tradition, not the anxious yearnings of a troubled conscience.

III

This early "theology of the cross" is the background for Luther's attack on indulgence sales in 1517. It is quite crucial to realize that Luther did not initially criticize indulgences for being legalistic or worry that they would lead believers to rely on their own works for salvation. On the contrary, his pastoral worry about the sale of indulgences was that simple people were being misled into confusing the external remission of penalties with the crucifying inner grace that drives out self-seeking.

And so let us diligently take care lest indulgences . . . become for us a cause of security and indolence and loss of interior grace. But let us take action carefully in order that the sickness of our nature may be perfectly healed and we thirst to come to God out of love for Him and hatred of this life and disgust with ourselves; that is, let us assiduously seek His healing grace.

It is between the fall of 1517 and the fall of 1518, in the midst of the great controversy in which Luther soon found himself embroiled, that most scholars now locate a crucial turn in his thinking. By the end of 1518, the theme of humble endurance of God's crucifying grace has receded into the background, not repudiated but no longer the focal point. The new center of Luther's theology of grace became the heart's confident assurance of the promised mercy of God in

Christ, what he will later describe simply as "the faith which grasps Christ," *fides apprehensiva Christi*.

We can get a more concrete sense of Luther's new position from the memorandum he presented to Cardinal Cajetan during their October meetings in Augsburg. Cajetan had challenged Luther's insistence that those who come to the sacrament of penance are to believe confidently that they receive God's grace and forgiveness thereby; Luther's main defense appeals to Christ's words in Matthew 16:19:

It is necessary, under peril of eternal damnation and the sin of unbelief, to believe these words of Christ: Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed also in heaven. Therefore if you come forward to the sacrament of penance and do not believe firmly that you are absolved in heaven, you come forward to judgment and damnation, because you do not believe that Christ has spoken what is true: Whatever you loose, etc., and so by your doubt you make Christ a liar, which is a horrible sin. . . . But when you believe the word of Christ, you honor his word and by this work you are righteous, etc.

The most important thing that happened to Luther in 1518 was that he rethought his theology of grace in the context of the theology of the sacraments. This is indeed new; Luther seems to have paid no serious attention to sacramental theology until he got embroiled in the indulgence controversy. But in that controversy, his emphasis on the inner purification of the heart by grace was bound to raise questions about the role of the sacraments. It is only after he had begun to be disturbed by the indulgence sales that we find him for the first time considering sacramental issues in earnest in his lectures.

The problem in sacramental theology that proved crucial for Luther was that of the relation among the outward sacramental action, the grace of God, and the faith required of the participant in the sacrament. The story of Luther's struggles with this question, from the summer of 1517 to the summer of 1518, is very complicated. In the spring of 1518 alone, Luther published three different and mutually exclusive solutions to the problem, including one that is indistinguishable from the position later associated with Zwingli.

What finally emerged in the summer of 1518 from this frantic rethinking—recall that Luther was trying to work through the theological issue while at the same time explaining to the world why he shouldn't be burned at the stake for heresy—seems to have been shaped primarily by reflection on texts such as Matthew 16:19: "Whatever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven." To the question of the sacraments Luther finally responds that the concrete, external, public sacramental act in the Church is the act of Jesus Christ. When we come to the sacrament, we

come to Jesus Christ: his word, his act, his authority.

The new focus on the sacraments is what gives Luther's theology after 1518 a very different shape from his early thought, even though he continued to be concerned with many of the same issues. Where the critical point in his earlier theology of grace is God's crucifying contradiction of sinful human nature, here the point on which everything hinges is the authority of Christ the Savior, exercised concretely in the sacramental signs of the Church.

Faith is now sharply defined by this sacramental situation: faith is openness to and acknowledgment of Christ's authority in its concrete sacramental exercise. There is no other prerequisite than faith for the fruitful reception of the sacrament, because the sacrament is itself the public act in which Christ bestows his grace on the ungodly. The public sacramental life of the Church is now seen as the locus of assurance, of certitude, the place where an entirely undialectical salvific communication takes place.

The insight that sacramental theology was the hinge for the "turn" in Luther's thinking in 1518 is widely acknowledged in the scholarly literature. But this turn is described quite wrongly if we take it as a "Reformation turn" away from the catholic tradition. On the contrary, I would argue that this was a turn toward the very heart of the catholic tradition.

The net effect of Luther's new focus on the authority of Christ in the sacramental sign is to subordinate the old strategy of contrariety to a new strategy of particularity, well summarized in a line from one of Luther's later sermons: "We have a definite Lord, one we can grasp." From 1518 on, it is the particularity and concreteness of God's presence that now foreclose idolatry; the true God, who by definition cannot be used, is the God who makes Himself available as He chooses, in the flesh born of Mary and the Church's sacramental practice, not in our religious speculation and self-interest.

In this new configuration, faith is no longer ineluctably involved in a never-ending dialectic of trust and despair; it is instead an altogether non-dialectical confidence in the unambiguous authority of the saving Christ concretely present in his Church. In Luther's early theology of the cross, God hides His saving presence in the torment He visits on His elect; in the mature theology, the gracious hiddenness of God is primarily a matter of His lowliness, His *kenosis* in the incarnate Son, in His chosen signs, and in His saints. The tribulations of the faithful are no longer identical with the grace that saves them (although they drive them to seek that grace and are the veil under which it is hidden from the proud and mighty of this world). The saving presence of God is not dialectical or ambiguous in the least.

The real question with which I am confronted when I approach the sacrament of penance is whether I believe that Christ speaks the truth when he says that whatever the Church shall loose on earth

will be loosed in heaven. If I believe, then I am called to put all my trust in his authority to save—and that means that I confess that Christ is the true God. If the one who authorizes the absolution of my sins is the true God, then indeed I may have an entirely undialectical assurance of salvation; this answer to the pastoral problem of the troubled conscience was a deeply important practical by-product of Luther's new appreciation of the sacraments. But that assurance of faith is first and foremost true worship, the acknowledgment of God in His Godhead, obedience and submission of the heart. Anxiety about my unworthiness and presumption on my merits are alike failures to acknowledge the authority of God in His concrete saving presence.

Luther's early theology was "mystical" in the sense that it was a theology focused on the transformation of human persons by union with God. Looking at Luther's development up to 1518, we might not be convinced that his mysticism was evolving in a catholic direction: theologies concerned with inner transformation and the purifying presence of God have, after all, been known to come unmoored from the catholic tradition. Similarly, one might be concerned that Luther's comparative lack of interest in the sacraments, innocent enough in his early lectures on the Psalms, is growing somewhat ominous when he finds it possible to expound Romans without mentioning baptism. Likewise, had Luther continued to develop his Christology along the lines of the theology of the cross, the outcome might well have been the subversion of his undoubted Christocentricity by a kind of unitarianism of the Holy Spirit, for which Christ would finally be only the archetype in which the Spirit's transforming grace is displayed.

In all these respects, the "turn" initiated in 1518 was a turn towards the core of the catholic tradition, a reaffirmation of its dogmatic and sacramental heart. For Luther after 1518, Christ is central not as pattern but as person; we are saved by the faith which acknowledges his authority, competence, and willingness to rescue those who call on him. The gospel proclaimed and sacramentally enacted in the Church is a word that calls us to put all our trust in Jesus the Son of Mary; thus who Jesus Christ is and where he gets the authority to promise such astounding things become the central theological questions. Or, as Luther put it in his lectures on Psalm 2 from the beginning of the 1530s, what is constitutive of the gospel is the identity of the one to whom it points:

This is to be a new doctrine. The old doctrine is this: Believe in God. . . . The law urges us to our works; that is the highest thing in Moses. But here no law is proposed, there is no exaction but a casting down; what is set before us is not our works but the Son of God. It offers us an object, which we ourselves are not, but rather: "My son." The definite doctrine which this King and

teacher Christ is to urge and exercise is this: not to teach the law or our works, but Christ, the Son of God, that one may look to him. . . . Therefore the chief doctrine, and the sum of all that surpasses Moses, is not to hear the law, what I should do, but to hear who that one is.

The Christological dogma, and with it the doctrine of the Trinity, are for just this reason much more clearly constitutive for Luther's theology of grace after 1518 than in the *Lectures on Romans* or the *Heidelberg Disputation*. Indeed, Luther can quite straightforwardly identify the doctrine of justification with the Christological dogma of the ancient Church, as he does in his Sermons on John 6:

You have heard already that he calls himself "the Son of Man." In this way he wants to show that he has our true flesh and blood, which he took to himself from the Virgin Mary, in which eternal life is to be found. *This is the article of justification*: the Holy Spirit wills that one under no circumstances learn, know, imagine, hear, or accept another God besides this God, whose flesh and blood we imprint and grasp in our hearts if we want to be saved. . . . In his flesh and blood you will find God; that is where He has located Himself, there you will meet Him, where the Son of Man is.

And the same holds true of catholic sacramentalism. After 1518, Luther is quite clear that it is in and through the public performance of the sacramental signs in the visible Church that grace is bestowed on those who believe. His mystical theology of uncreated grace, the purifying encounter with God in His very Godhead, is henceforth anchored to the preaching and ritual of the Church as the concrete locus of God's certain, undialectical presence. Indeed, it becomes an explicit theological axiom for Luther that inward and spiritual grace is given only in and through the public, bodily, sacramental practice of the Church.

Luther's impatient arguments for the reform of sacramental practice and theology, and his frequent vilification of received usages and opinions, should not therefore be allowed to obscure what might be called his "deep catholic" commitment to the sacramentality of grace, with its unmistakable Patristic resonances. For Luther and the Fathers alike, the worship of the *ekklesia* is the mystical epiphany of God's *philanthropia* in Christ. It is no accident at all that Luther's major work of 1519 was a series of sermons describing the way in which Christian existence is founded and formed by the sacraments.

IV

This reading of Luther's development suggests that the Western schism, far from being the

appropriate historical outcome of principled theological disagreement, was instead a tragic chapter of accidents. There are no historical grounds for believing that the schism was the necessary outcome of Luther's theology of grace. On the contrary, on the one occasion when Luther's theological proposals received a halfway careful hearing from a representative of the Roman Church, at his meetings with Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg in 1518, the conclusion reached was that his doctrine of justifying faith was not obviously heretical or in clear opposition to the tradition of the Church. While Cajetan only understood Luther's views imperfectly, and regarded them as temerarious and mistaken, he was ready to recommend that they receive further discussion and consideration before a final judgment was reached.

Schism was the contingent outcome of the badly managed *causa Lutheri*, the ecclesiastical examination of Luther's orthodoxy in 1518-1519, and the controversy over teaching authority with which it became entangled. On Luther's side, the final break with the Church authorities came in the wake of Leo X's bull of November 1518; in that document, as Luther saw it, Leo arrogated to himself the power of defining Church teaching without accountability to Scripture, the Fathers, or the ancient canons. This led Luther eventually to conclude that the Roman Church was irrevocably committed to the claim that the authority of the pope stood even above Holy Scripture and it was in this context that he came, over the next several years, to believe that the papacy was the prophesied Antichrist of the last days, a conviction he then held to his dying day with a literalistic fervor that his modern interpreters have rarely been willing to take as seriously as he did.

When Luther became convinced that the papacy was Antichrist, all the energy of his theological vision was harnessed to the forces already working to dissolve the Church's unity; this more than anything else made schism inevitable. There is blame enough to go around for this tragic and pointless outcome. The theological obtuseness of the Roman court theologians (Cajetan partly excepted), the inability or unwillingness of the Roman authorities to appropriate their own best ecclesiological traditions, and the unlovely influence of financial politics on the handling of the doctrinal issues all played a considerable role, as did Luther's impatience and anger, his inability to take stupid and inappropriate papal teaching at all calmly (perhaps because his own early view of the papal office was unrealistically high), as well as his tendency to dramatize his own situation in apocalyptic terms. The tragedy is compounded, moreover, on the reading that I have proposed, by the irony of the fact that in material theological terms the Luther of 1519 arguably did greater justice to the core convictions of the catholic tradition than did the Luther of 1517. □

Girard Among the Girardians

J. Bottum

VIOLENCE UNVEILED. BY GIL BAILIE. *Crossroad*. 293 pp. \$24.95.

THE SACRED GAME. BY CESÁREO BANDERA. *Pennsylvania State University Press*. 318 pp. \$16.95 paper.

THE GOSPEL AND THE SACRED. BY ROBERT G. HAMERTON-KELLY. *Fortress*. 175 pp. \$14 paper.

THE BIBLE, VIOLENCE, AND THE SACRED. BY JAMES G. WILLIAMS. *Trinity*. 288 pp. \$16 paper.

In 1947, in response to Arthur Koestler's anti-Stalinist novel *Darkness at Noon*, a French philosopher produced one of the most horrifying books ever written. Though many of his contemporaries thought Maurice Merleau-Ponty (and not Jean-Paul Sartre or Albert Camus) to have the finest philosophical gifts of his generation, what makes Merleau-Ponty's *Humanism and Terror* so horrifying is not simply that it exhibits a first-class mind pimping for Stalin and the Moscow Show Trials of the 1930s. What makes it so horrifying is that Merleau-Ponty is right—obscenely right, immorally right: violence *can* found culture, terror *can* preserve stability, the unanimity created by the sacrifice of a scapegoat *can* become so complete that it includes even its victim.

In 1972, a French literary critic returned to the question of the violent root of culture. But where Merleau-Ponty, uneasy with his own analysis, turned away from further investigation, René Girard has relentlessly pursued the effect of violence through literature, anthropology, psychology, and biblical criticism. In a stream of books—*Violence and the Sacred* (1972), *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1978), *The Scapegoat* (1982), *Job* (1985), and *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (1990)—and a torrent of articles and interviews, Girard has relentlessly pursued what even he laughingly calls his *idée fixe*: the way in which scapegoats found, preserve, and unify culture.

The pursuit has cost Girard something of the influence in American and European academic circles that he gained in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1961, he published *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, a study of desire and the way in which “triangular” relations form between characters in the works of certain novelists (especially Cervantes, Proust, and Dostoyevsky). In

France the influential Marxist critic Lucien Goldmann gave the book the sort of major review that founds a young critic's career—praising it primarily, I think, because Girard seemed to provide (in the “humanistic Marxism” line once held by Georg Lukács) a way to use great literature to criticize bourgeois life without relying upon the Freudianism that dominated literary criticism at the time.

That promoting Marxism was not Girard's actual intent has since become clear. Though the ultra-conservative critic Thomas Molnar once accused Girard of positivism and antireligious materialism, the postmodernist radical Hayden White has more believably accused him of medievalism and reactionary defense of religion. But through the 1960s, with the (still untranslated) studies of Dostoyevsky that followed *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* and with a series of powerful essays (partially collected in the 1978 *To Double Business Bound*), Girard became a major figure in literary criticism and an important player on the American university scene. (Reared in France, he has spent his career teaching in America, recently retiring from Stanford.) The publication of *Violence and the Sacred*, his sortie onto the anthropology battlefield over which the structuralists and post-structuralists were fighting to the death, was greeted—by literary critics, at least—with ecstatic reviews.

Given the generally radical and overwhelmingly antireligious bias of modern literary criticism, this importance granted a Roman Catholic thinker represents a considerable anomaly. But there was a certain coyness about Christian faith in Girard's literary and anthropological work through the sixties and seventies—a certain tempering of the wind to the shorn lambs of the literary fold, perhaps, or even a certain jesuitical misdirection. In a recent book-length interview with Michel Treguer, Girard speaks of his return to Catholicism in 1959. Only the most careful reader, however, could have discovered Christianity in Girard's early writings. Michel Serres seemed eccentric and willful when, in his review of the 1978 study of psychology, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, he failed to mention that the book concerns the revelation of Christ. But many reviewers missed the implications of Christian revelation in the 1972 *Violence and the Sacred*. The influence of that earlier book and the place of its central chapters in anthologies of modern literary criticism may owe a great deal to this anti-Christian misreading.

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As the possibility of misreading Girard's ventures into biblical revelation became less plausible, however, Girard's acknowledged influence on literary criticism began to wane. Despite the contemporary interest in victimization, citations by literary critics to his writings have become rarer and direct studies of his work (such as the feminist attacks by Sarah Kofman and Toril Moi) have become more combative. In recent years, Girard's stock in the academic establishments of France and America has very much declined. But this decline has been matched with a gain, as a number of writers, banding together as the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, have taken up Girard's notion of the sacrificial scapegoat and devoted themselves to its application. Like Leo Strauss, Ernest Becker, and Eric Voegelin before him, René Girard has been transformed into something of a sect in America, with disciples, translators, and proselytizers.

To some extent, the transformation may have had a good effect, releasing Girard from the ghetto of literary criticism and pointing him in directions he needed to go—notably with Fr. Raymund Schwager's application of Girard's work to orthodox Christology in *Must There Be Scapegoats?* (1978) and with Andrew McKenna's analysis of philosophy's hidden violence in *Violence and Difference* (1992). But this development may have had an unhappy effect as well, over-extending his thought and yet simultaneously narrowing it into a "Girardian System." Both these effects—the good and the bad—are visible in four books published by Girardians in the last year: Cesáreo Bandera's literary study, *The Sacred Game*; James Williams' new edition of his 1991 *The Bible, Violence, and the Sacred*; Robert Hamerton-Kelly's study of violence in Mark, *The Gospel and the Sacred*; and Gil Bailie's account of contemporary culture, *Violence Unveiled*.

Of the four books, Bailie's *Violence Unveiled* is the best introduction to the Girardian topics of violence, culture, and sacrifice. It is an easily accessible and beautifully crafted analysis that moves freely from Greek literature to current news stories, from Aztec myths to Captain Cook's experience in Tahiti, and finds in them all the grounds for a persuasive biblical and anti-violent Christian apologetics. Specialist and nonspecialist alike will find Bailie's book rewarding; I recommend it highly. In *The Sacred Game*, the Spanish scholar Cesáreo Bandera presents a much more technical study of the sacred in the poetical epics and philosophical aesthetics of both Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance; specialists will find Bandera's introduction and his chapters on Virgil and Renaissance poetry especially fruitful.

With Williams' *The Bible, Violence, and the Sacred* and Hamerton-Kelly's *The Gospel and the Sacred*, however, the problems of "Girardianism"—of Girard's insights taken as a scientific system—begin

to come clear. Both books contain biblical readings that specialists will find interesting and provocative, and Williams includes a marvelous conclusion that applies his biblical exegesis to contemporary social analysis. But in his introduction Williams briefly indulges the temptation to make Girard's "anthropology of revelation" systematic, while Hamerton-Kelly succumbs completely—devoting twenty-four pages (out of 175) to a systematic appendix on "the theory of the generative mimetic scapegoating mechanism" (or the "GMSM," as he constantly abbreviates it).

Girard himself, however, denies that there is any "Girard System." Following a tradition dating back to Descartes' 1648 *Conversation with Burman*, French intellectuals often use interviews to put on record major qualifications of their work, and Girard has insisted in dozens of interviews that he has no theory. "If a Rabelais shows up," he jokes with Rebecca Adams, "he will do hilarious things . . . with our use of the word 'theory.' . . . The next generation will wonder what could move so many people to go on endlessly writing the most convoluted prose in a complete void of their own making, disconnected not only from the reality of their world but from the great literary texts, of which recent theory has been making a shamelessly parasitic use."

The desire to follow a French tradition, however, may not be the only reason that so much of Girard's thought appears in interviews. *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* is an aggravating book to read, primarily because it consists entirely of interviews with a pair of psychiatrists, Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort. "We quite deliberately left out all concessions to the reader," the introduction superfluously notes. But Girard's resignation to using the form of an interview—his inability throughout the 1970s to produce a straightforward book on the anthropology of Christian revelation—originates, I believe, in his desire to avoid the tar pit of quasi-science in which Freud found himself so deeply mired.

Rather, beginning with what he calls a "dense intuition," a "block" penetrated little by little, Girard has moved in his investigations since 1959 from an observation of desire in the novel to an observation of revelation in the Gospel. The great texts are deeper, stronger, and larger than our readings; they interpret our theories rather than allow our theories to interpret them. *Things Hidden* is a convoluted, difficult work that begins as anthropology's critique of biblical revelation and turns into revelation's critique of anthropology. At his best, Girard has simply let the progress of his reading—first in literature, then in anthropology, then in psychology, then in biblical theology—strip away the outer layers of his "dense intuition" to reveal the Cross.

This progress has sometimes exposed him as an opsimath, discovering important theological texts only late in his career. Though Fergus Kerr (in his

defense of Girard against John Milbank's objections in the 1990 *Theology and Social Theory*) reports that Girard was not aware of parallels between his own analysis and St. Augustine's until others pointed it out to him, Girard observes in the interview with Treguer that three-quarters of what he has to say is already in St. Augustine. Though in 1978 he dismissed with surprising offhandedness the sacrificial theology of the New Testament's Letter to the Hebrews, in the 1993 interview with Rebecca Adams he mocks his own earlier dismissal and reasserts the importance of that text. The more orthodoxy Girard discovers, the more orthodox he becomes. This progress of discovery may be what preserved him from anthropology's quasi-scientific reduction of all religions to a single phenomenon of the sacred: Girard sharply criticizes "the inability of the greatest minds in the modern world to grasp the difference between the Christian crib at Christmastime and the bestial monstrosities of mythological births."

The insight on the edge of which Merleau-Ponty trembled in 1947 is an insight into the failure of mythology after Christ: the election of a scapegoat may in fact have worked to found culture in the days before biblical revelation, but the Gospels reveal how it works, and an understanding of how it works destroys the possibility of it working. If we know the victim to be innocent, we can still pronounce him guilty, but we will not succeed in being drawn together—we will not succeed in founding a culture—with the pronouncement.

Human desire is not essentialized, Girard argues against Freud; it does not come naturally packaged in such mandatory Freudian shapes as the death instinct, the Oedipal longing of the boy to possess his mother, or the woman's envy of the male phallus. Desire is instead *mimetic* (as the great novelists have all seen), and we learn what to desire by watching the desiring of others. The key to understanding how the sacrifice of a scapegoat once worked to found and preserve culture lies in Girard's notion of desire. Underneath cultural scapegoat myths there lurks the desperate hope of controlling the outbreak of swirling, undifferentiated desire—*mimetic* desire gone mad in a cultural crisis in which imitation imitates imitation and violence breeds upon itself.

Some Girardians seem to envision a pre-cultural state of primal violence and thus to open Girard's thought to Milbank's complaint that what little we know of ancient history offers no evidence that cities and towns were actually born in riot and mayhem. To interpret scapegoat myths, however, we need not posit a primal violence. We need only notice that every culture manifests in its myths a deep terror of the breakdown of all distinctions and the mimetic escalation of violence. Against this threatened violence of all against all, cultural myth poses the solution of another violence: the violence of all against

one, the violence in which the scapegoat—the sinner, the disease-carrier, the heretic, the witch, the Jew—is arbitrarily selected as the source of the cultural breakdown and murdered, sacrificed, or expelled.

It is tempting to pause and note that by the elimination of the scapegoat, the cycle of mimetic violence ceases and the culture is able to establish its violence-preventing distinctions and forms. Indeed, Girard devoted most of *Violence and the Sacred* to analyzing the ways in which much religious ritual reenacts symbolically both the original mad mimetic violence of a culture and the cultural foundation achieved by the sacrifice of a scapegoat. Ritual thus serves the important cultural purpose of reinforcing and transmitting the lessons learned in a scapegoat-broken cycle of violence. The scapegoat, perceived as simultaneously the cause and the solution to violence, becomes the *sacred*: the single locus of both divine terror and divine blessing, the unity of the two manifestations of the holy famously described by Rudolph Otto.

The more interesting point, however, and the one that has occupied Girard for the last twenty years, is the impossibility of our ever knowing that this is in fact how myth works. The story of the scapegoat ought to be impenetrable. Myth serves primarily to hide the arbitrariness of the victim and the fact that the innocent victim is a victim at all. If we know the victim to be arbitrary, we cannot succeed in making him sacred; if we know the victim to be innocent, the cycle of violence and the breakdown of culture cannot be solved—as they were not solved in Athens, for instance, by the innocent Socrates' death.

We have in cultural anthropology, however, one set of religious texts that seems to take the side of the victim. Often in the Old Testament and overwhelmingly in the New, the mythology of scapegoat sacrifice is penetrated and thereby rendered ineffectual. Christianity is a religion, as Paul Dumouchel puts it, that "should not exist." Girard is entirely serious in his "anthropology of revelation," but he means the opposite of the reduction of Judeo-Christian revelation to a general anthropological category of "sacred religion." Judaism and Christianity are fundamentally anti-sacred in their partisanship for the victim, and this is only possible (logically, scientifically, anthropologically) if Judaism and Christianity actually do have a divine revelation—if the Bible, to put it bluntly, is *true*.

There are obviously dangers in this sort of thesis-driven biblical interpretation. Any study that lifts up one interpretive strand tempts us to pit certain biblical texts against others, and Williams in his readings must struggle against the temptation to dismiss the passages that run counter to his thesis. In a way that perhaps fails to do justice to the history of Hebraic texts, both Hamerton-Kelly and Bailie seem unduly willing to take the prophets as the center of the Old Testament.

Worse, this sort of biblical interpretation may tempt us not only to pit Christian revelation against Jewish religion (an opposition for which there is ample precedent in the New Testament), but to pit Christian revelation against the Jews. Robert Hamerton-Kelly has struggled in recent years against charges that his biblical scholarship betrays an animus against the Jews, and a careful reading of his work reveals that such charges are not true. But by beginning his study of the Gospel of Mark with a strong, visceral image of the bloodstained Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Christ, Hamerton-Kelly seems to admit the worse charge that the Gospels themselves are anti-Semitic (a charge Girard himself vehemently rebuts in a 1993 essay in the journal *Biblical Interpretation*).

There are also theological and ecclesiological dangers in this sort of thesis. That the Church has not always been true to the spirit of the Gospels is undeniable, but this fact does not invalidate the Church. Any reading of Christian history as a development in understanding a single Gospel theme risks, for example, Teilhard de Chardin's sort of evolutionary theology, with its consequent dismissal of patristic and medieval formulations. Hans Urs von Balthasar, in his brief critique in *Theo-Drama*, complains of Girard's too easy rejection of St. Anselm's account of the Atonement (as though God "finds it necessary to defend His honor"). In a weak moment at the end of *Violence Unveiled*, Bailie seems near to saying that the Church is something we must outgrow.

What the Girardian analysis can help us see, however, is the way in which Christianity itself contributes to our current cultural crises. Hitler sacrificed millions of Jews to found what turned out to be a twelve-year reich, Stalin made scapegoats of millions of "counterrevolutionaries" to preserve a regime with only fifty more years of life, and every little dictator since has slaughtered his own victims to create or maintain an ephemeral authority. Thousand-year cultures are not founded by sacrifice anymore, for the process of scapegoating no longer seems to work very well. Everyone in the world has learned the Christian demythologizing of sacred violence too well, and no one trusts sacrifice to do what it once did.

Of course, the Serbs still undertake ethnic cleansing, the Iraqis still speak of the Kurds as a disease, the Chinese still hunt down counterrevolutionaries—for there is no other way they know to try to maintain themselves. The culture-founding violence of the sacred is the only method we know for ending the culture-destroying violence of mimetic desire. Gil Bailie, throughout his book, and James Williams, in his conclusion, trace the appearance and breakdown of the "scapegoat mechanism" in innumerable contemporary events. Bandera similarly includes in *The Sacred Game* a fascinating "Marxian Epilogue" in which he traces the sacrificial logic of Marx's analysis of money (though its relation to the rest of his book is not immediately apparent).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was entirely right when he defended the objective need of the revolutionary state to sacrifice subjectively innocent scapegoats, just as the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt was right when he spoke in the late 1920s of the state's need to kill its political enemies on strictly "existential-ontological" grounds. But Merleau-Ponty and Schmitt were nonetheless self-defeating in their attempts to describe the process (when we understand how a myth works, it stops working), and they were too late besides. The consistent failure of sacrifice in modern times, the escalation of apparently insoluble violence, and the strange cycles of mimetic victimization into which we have fallen (in which victims compete for notice of their victimization) are all results of the universalizing of Christian revelation's invincible demythologizing of the sacred.

What has been lost in the universalizing, however, is the specificity of Christian revelation. This unspecific universality is presumably what historians mean when they speak of contemporary culture as the post-Christian age. The pre-Christian sacred scapegoat can no longer preserve culture, and we face the collapse of all our cultural distinctions in a mad cycle of mimetic violence. But despite this, or even perhaps because of this, Girard suggests that we may at last have reached the moment for a new cultural appropriation of Christian revelation—of those things hidden since the foundation of the world. Violence can no longer cast out violence, Satan can no longer cast out Satan, and only our return to the gospel can save us. [7]

Books In Review

Rescuing Feminism from the Feminists

"FEMINISM IS NOT THE STORY OF MY LIFE": HOW TODAY'S FEMINIST ELITE HAS LOST TOUCH WITH THE REAL CONCERNS OF WOMEN. By ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE. *Doubleday*. 288 pp. \$23.95.

Reviewed by Mary Ann Glendon

THIS TIMELY and well-documented book addresses the puzzle of why nearly two-thirds of American women embrace many of the goals of the feminist movement, yet say that they do not consider themselves feminists. What does it mean when a woman says, "I am not a feminist, but . . .?"

The short answer, according to historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (who describes herself as a feminist), is that most women perceive "official" feminism as indifferent to their deepest concerns. In particular, they are put off by the movement's negative attitude toward marriage and motherhood, its intolerance for dissent from its most controversial positions, its attacks on men, and its inattention to the practical problems of balancing work and family on a day-to-day basis. Hence the title, echoing a refrain running through the author's conversations with a diverse sample of women: "Feminism is not the story of my life."

Fox-Genovese is quick to point out that today's women have equal difficulty locating themselves in traditional narratives of domesticity. Women of the nineties value their increased independence and opportunities. Though many work out of necessity, that has not prevented em-

ployment from becoming an important part of the way they think about who they are and who they wish to be. Thus, "neither polarized story will fit the rich and messy complexities of the lives we actually live."

Bringing familiar demographic data to life through personal interviews, the author paints a vivid portrait of that complexity. She lets us hear the voices of women whose lives are defined by the competing pulls of work and family; women who hold fast to an ideal of companionable marriage, but insist that their daughters should be able to support themselves (in case marriage fails or never occurs); women who are living through the breakdown of community at a time when they and their families need surrounding support structures more than ever; women whose expanded opportunities for personal freedom have been accompanied by diminished prospects for stable family life; women who were swept up in the sexual revolution, and who have begun to count the casualties.

THE WIDE VARIETY of women's voices represented, together with the author's hard-headed analysis of economic data, highlight the dimensions of race and class so often ignored by feminist writers. It is striking, therefore, that she finds so much commonality in the midst of diversity. That commonality, arising chiefly from the experience of motherhood, is central to her thesis. Though far from aligning herself with "difference" feminists who treat men and women as virtually separate species, she does insist that women's concerns are bound up with children to a much greater extent than men's. "Motherhood," she says, "changes women's sense of who they are."

That proposition leads her to be sharply critical of organized feminism's response to our historically unprecedented situation in which most women (five out of six) still become mothers, but the majority of mothers of young children work outside the home and a record proportion are raising children alone.

The new working woman, she points out, was not created by feminism, but by an economic revolution. The rise of the global economy has made it difficult for most families to get by without a second wage earner. The "big winners" have been "upscale young women who are pursuing careers in business and the professions—the women for whom the official feminist lobby, despite pretensions, actually speaks."

The problem with the lobby, according to Fox-Genovese, is that it focuses more on what the "feminist elite" believes women should want rather than on what most women actually do want. What is notably lacking in organized feminism, she charges, is support for women who wish to give priority, at least temporarily, to family over work. "Feminists expect children to fit into the nooks and crannies of women's lives the way women have traditionally fitted into the nooks and crannies of men's. But when motherhood is demoted from the center of women's lives to a parenthesis, children are demoted as well." Under current social and economic conditions, she insists: "The real struggle is not between women and men, but between children and work. The real losers in these conflicts are children."

In an important sense, children and motherhood are the real subjects of Fox-Genovese's book. And her main complaint is at least as much about our society's unresponsiveness to child-raising families as it is about the indifference of organized feminism to mothers. Accordingly, she endorses a range of European-style tax reforms and workplace policies, including the "mommy track," designed to facilitate the choices of parents who wish to be at home with their young children. Yet she admits none of these measures can be the cure-alls their proponents sometimes claim. The fact is that no one really knows "how to combine opportunity for women, economic stability for families, and the crying needs of children."

And there's the rub. For what is usually missing from the kinds of stories we Americans like to tell is

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the tragic sense of life. After critiquing feminist and domesticity narratives, the author says, "We want pieces of each story: a successful career and a happy marriage; equal pay for equal work and conditions that allow us to care for our children; freedom from sexual harassment and discrimination and a measure of sexual freedom." Well, yes. But Fox-Genovese is too canny to suggest that we can have it all. There are costs and limits to be reckoned with. Thus, her sober, realistic book will be unpopular, not only with die-hard feminists, but with cockeyed optimists.

THE QUESTION might be raised whether Fox-Genovese is beating a dead horse. After all, the great majority of American women decline to call themselves feminists, and young women are even more alienated from the label than older ones (only one college woman in five accepts it). Most women have clearly repudiated the peculiar type of feminism that appeared in the 1970s—distinguished by its negative attitude toward family life, its loyalty tests on gay rights and abortion, and its puzzling combination of sexual anger and sexual aggressiveness.

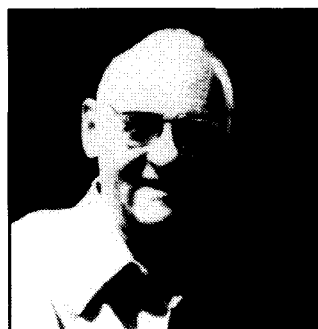
There are a number of factors, however, that preserve that old-line, hard-line feminism as a vital force in the realm of public policy. As Fox-Genovese points out, the high-earning women who do benefit from the careerist emphasis of 1970s feminism are highly effective in keeping its ideology alive. Many men in positions of power appease their lobby in the manner of the lazy judge in Luke's Gospel who decided a case in favor of a persistent petitioner just to keep her from pestering him. "I care little for God or man," he said, "but this widow is wearing me out." Feminist rhetoric has also become a cover story for various special interests. Chief among these is the population control lobby, which has seen abortion evolve from the scourge of nineteenth-century feminists to a full-blown woman's right. Most importantly, perhaps, the women who are most neglected by the feminist

movement are the least able to organize into an effective political force. They are too busy running from home to job and back again. Thus, like rays from a dead star, the emanations of seventies feminism live on.

Nevertheless, a new, more responsive feminism does seem to be gaining ground. Unlike its predecessor,

the emerging feminism of the nineties attends to the real-life needs and aspirations of a wide range of women. It wrestles with harmonizing family life and employment in world where a balance struck either way is risky. It sees women and men as partners rather than antagonists in the quest for better ways to love and work. The new feminism is in-

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clusive rather than polarizing; open-minded rather than dogmatic. It recognizes that the fates of men, women, and children, privileged and poor alike, are inextricably intertwined. On the basis of her current book, it seems safe to say that Fox-Genovese will be one of the most important architects of that new feminism.

The Circus of Death

THE GRAVEST SHOW ON EARTH: AMERICA IN THE AGE OF AIDS. By ELINOR BURKETT. *Houghton Mifflin.* 375 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Phillip E. Johnson

ELINOR BURKETT portrays the AIDS culture wars as a kind of circus in which a series of clowns and villains perform on stage while the audience slowly dies from neglect. She does not purport to give the complete story of AIDS. Her book has nothing to say about Africa or Asia, and very little about hemophiliacs, intravenous drug users, or infants. Burkett's story is about the relationships between the gay activists, the scientists, the drug companies, and the media—as seen by a Miami-based reporter who describes her own book as a “howl of venom, wrath, hysteria, fury, and desperation.”

The theme of the book as a whole is encapsulated in the first chapter, a dual biography of two flamboyant egotists who became allies: the biomedical scientist Robert Gallo and the gay playwright and founder of ACT-UP Larry Kramer. Gallo was determined to prove that a human retrovirus discovered in his laboratory at the National Cancer Institute was responsible for some disease serious enough to merit a Nobel Prize for the discoverer. Kramer played the role of spokesman for gay rage, freely accusing scientists and government officials of sponsoring a “holocaust” or “genocide” because

they had not taken swift enough action to prevent or cure AIDS.

The accusations were absurd, but the liberal media culture found it easy to believe that the hated Reagan Administration was uninterested in curing AIDS because it didn't care about the victims. In this climate of opinion health officials were under enormous pressure to do something—*anything*—to show that they had a viable program. The immediate result was the famous press conference in April 1984 at which the Secretary of Health and Human Services announced on shaky evidence that one of Dr. Gallo's retroviruses (later named HIV) was the “probable” cause of AIDS. The Secretary spectacularly rebutted the barrage of criticism with the prediction that, with the pathogen known, a vaccine would follow in a couple of years. The resources of government were soon devoted to exploiting the breakthrough. AIDS research became HIV research, and funding for studying other possibilities became unavailable.

The second major step that was taken to stem the criticism was the approval of AZT as a treatment. Burroughs-Wellcome, the manufacturer of AZT, took advantage of the panic to rush through FDA approval of a drug that it had on the shelf as a failed cancer cure. Activist demonstrators, with help from conservative politicians pushing an agenda of deregulation, intimidated FDA scientists who found the evidence of efficacy inadequate. The FDA, which had stoutly resisted the claims of terminal cancer patients in the laetrile episode, caved in to the far more potent AIDS lobby. Whether AZT gives any substantial benefit to AIDS sufferers is still hotly debated, but nobody disputes that it has immensely benefited Burroughs-Wellcome stockholders.

BURKETT never pins down exactly what she is so angry about. No doubt AIDS politicking has involved lots of greed, paranoia, and hypocrisy, but that doesn't distinguish AIDS from a number of other things going on in government and business. The

promised vaccine or cure is nowhere in sight, but the AIDS advocates persuaded the government to provide “a level of Federal attention, support, and services that were the envy of people with cancer, multiple sclerosis, and heart disease.” Progress has been made treating some AIDS-related conditions, and new antiviral drugs that might be better than AZT are on the way. That AIDS has proved so difficult to cure or even understand is cause for disappointment, but where's the scandal?

Burkett actually gives her readers the facts needed to answer the question, but it takes a bit of background to separate the wheat from the chaff. The AIDS failure has been less a product of the faults of individuals than an illustration of the adage that it's no advantage to travel faster unless you are going in the right direction. In science as in law, meticulous attention to established procedure is essential for accuracy, but it is also extremely expensive, especially when delay may cost lives. Scientists like other people tend to see what they want to see, and they have no immunity from traits like impulsiveness or greed. Ordinarily, these traits are held in check by rigorous peer review before claims even get published, and by the still more rigorous criticism that really important claims will receive from other laboratories for months or years thereafter.

If government officials had waited for Robert Gallo's virus hypothesis to survive that kind of criticism before making it the basis of a huge research program, however, they would have been excoriated for going about business as usual while multitudes were dying. The path of least resistance was to go for broke with the best idea currently available, and that is why the campaign against “the virus that causes AIDS” was announced at a press conference before the scientific community had a chance to evaluate whether the virus really does cause AIDS.

Once the scientific army was on the march, with everybody's research program based on the premise of HIV-causation, the time

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for debating the starting point had passed. When the prestigious Berkeley molecular biologist Peter Duesberg published a review article in 1987 opposing the HIV hypothesis, he was ignored for two years and then ridiculed and deprived of all funding. If the same arguments had been widely circulated in the spring of 1984, they would have received a respectful hearing and the course of events might have been entirely different.

THE SAME SENSE of urgency accounts for the hasty approval of AZT and the drastic easing of previously established drug testing procedures. Drug tests must be placebo-controlled and "double-blind," meaning that neither the doctors nor the patients know who is getting the drug and who the placebo. They also should be continued long enough so that long-range as well as short-term effects are measured, and repeated so that it is clear that different research teams get similar results. These precautions are important because of the notorious "placebo effect" on patients, and because doctors who understandably want the drug to work may see benefits that aren't really there or are only temporary.

Rigorous design and evaluation of trials is particularly necessary because the drug companies who are seeking approval fund the studies and even select the research sites. Scientists may have a lot to gain by putting the most favorable possible spin on the data, especially when (as in the case of AIDS) their superiors in the scientific hierarchy desperately want to announce the discovery of an effective treatment. Independent evaluators need to make sure that unfavorable interpretations of the data were not overlooked.

Burkett correctly reports that the crucial study that purported to establish the efficacy of AZT adhered to standard criteria only in a formal sense. Patients and doctors knew who was getting AZT because the drug caused such severe anemia (among other unpleasant effects) that many patients required blood

transfusions to survive. After seven months, however, nineteen members of the placebo group had died as opposed to only one in the AZT group. The trial was then halted before completion on the grounds that efficacy had been established and it would be unethical to continue giving any AIDS patient a placebo. Three months later, thirteen of the placebo group who had been switched to AZT had died, along with seven who had been on AZT from the beginning. Despite serious reservations by its staff over what this ambiguous trial had proved, the FDA gave in to the pressure and speedily approved AZT for the market.

When the later and far more extensive European Concorde trial showed that AZT did not extend life for asymptomatic HIV-positives, enthusiasm was dampened but not extinguished. AZT remains in widespread use for both AIDS patients and asymptomatic HIV-positives. Because it is considered unethical to include a placebo group in tests once an effective drug exists, AZT is also the "gold standard" against which other drugs are compared in efficacy tests. As a result AIDS patients now have the dubious benefit of being able to take a variety of drugs with uncertain benefits and damaging side effects.

TWELVE YEARS after the 1984 press conference, knowledgeable AIDS patients have learned to distrust the press releases about impending wonder drugs. Vaccine trials have been put off into the indefinite future, amid confusion over exactly what a virus should be expected to do. Robert Gallo remarked in a statement reported in the *New York Times* on December 6, 1995 that "The No. 1 reason that we don't have a vaccine today is that we don't know what to induce in humans." Such statements reflect a significant gap in the theoretical knowledge needed to design a treatment strategy, and indeed the scientists are still trying to find a mechanism by which HIV can be destroying far more immune system cells than it actually infects.

In a better world, the journals would be full of demands for a fundamental reconsideration of a premise adopted in such dubious circumstances, especially now that the campaign based upon that premise has resulted in so much scientific failure. But too many reputations are at stake for that to be allowed to happen. Instead the President met with the AIDS lobbies in December 1995 to reassure them that the national effort will continue to proceed along the same lines, but with more money. The scandal of the circus of death is not so much that essential scientific procedures were short-circuited in a time of emergency as that after a decade of failure the researchers are unwilling to go back to the starting point to figure out where things began to go wrong.

Elinor Burkett is like many other reporters who have become emotionally involved with the tragedy of AIDS. She provides a lot of the important facts, but in the end can do no more than express her frustration that things have turned out so badly. What this story needs is a reporter who can describe the scientific fiasco that resulted when the activists succeeded in pressuring the scientists to commit themselves to a theory, and to a drug, before they understood the nature of the disease.

The Extraordinary and the Quotidian

THE ORDINARY TRANSFORMED: AN INQUIRY INTO THE CHRISTIAN VISION OF TRANSCENDENCE. By R. R. RENO. *Eerdmans*. 222 pp. \$19 paper.

Reviewed by Robert W. Jenson

PROFESSOR RENO's book can be taken, and could then be reviewed, in several ways. For a first possibility, it can be taken as a revisionist reading of the theology of Karl Rahner in certain of its more formal aspects, particularly as Rahner con-

ROBERT W. JENSON is Professor of Religion at St. Olaf College.

strues the relation between involvement in the ordinary world and the specific life of faith. A reviewer's task would then be an assessment of the cogency and accuracy of Reno's reading.

Taken this way, the book is surely of the first importance, since Catholic theology in America is dominated by Rahnerians who, if

Reno is right, have at least in this matter misread their master. I, however, cannot assess the correctness of a particular reading of Rahner, having never disciplined myself to study some key aspects of his thought—I tend to prefer my Schleiermacher straight. I will therefore for the purposes of the following suspend any lurking disbelief that Rahner is as

Reno presents him. And I am delighted to do so, since the maxims American Rahnerians have derived from Rahner seem to me sadly inadequate to American Catholicism's actual situation, often amounting to a rerun of some of nineteenth-century Protestantism's less happy thoughts. If Rahner is not as Rahnerians have presented him, that is a very good thing.

However that may be, Catholic theologians should certainly read the book. If Rahnerians do not find themselves corrected they will find much usefully to be refuted, and Catholics of other sorts may be heartened or further depressed. Protestants should, from this point of view, read it to be led into an otherwise often closed but nonetheless decisive discussion by a guide who is himself not Catholic but who knows the history and is sympathetic to the problems and proffered solutions.

BUT RENO's volume can also be taken rather differently and more ecumenically: as a brief history of modernity's destructive pendulum swing between a desperate secularism—here called "pure immanence"—and one or another version of otherworldliness—here lumped together as "radical transcendence." Thus the work opens with a simply delightful exegesis of Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. The dialogue is read as a founding display of the terms of modern travail; and is simultaneously used by Reno to introduce the goals and language of his own succeeding analyses.

In Hume's fictive conversation, Philo, according to Reno, represents pure immanence, Demea represents radical transcendence, and Cleanthes represents longing for what Western modernity truly needs, "amphibious transcendence." The latter, if ever exemplified, would be a way of responding to the call of transcendence precisely in and through the "ordinary" conditions and tasks of this world, of living simultaneously in the "extraordinary" and the quotidian. The natural religion Cleanthes pleads for is, as Reno interprets

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Edited by MICHAEL CROMARTIE

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it, a way of being in the world that is genuinely both natural and religious (here Reno's Cleanthes is surely not "the historical Cleanthes," but never mind). And Cleanthes' early departure from the scene marks the impossibility of achieving his dream within the standard terms of modern debate.

The story then continues from the French Revolution, which according to Reno "created modern Catholicism." Reno's account of modernity's nineteenth-century spiritual path gives French Catholicism the paradigmatic place more conventional accounts give to German Protestantism. He describes neo-scholasticism's tendency to a radical and empty transcendence, in this context appearing as "extrinsicism"; and follows with an account of the *nouvelle théologie* and its opposite temptation to collapse grace into nature, its "intrinsicism."

Rahner then appears as the one who shows the way out of Catholic theology's dilemma and so out of general modernity's closed circuit between immanence and transcendence. The way out is to begin with "the fundamental proposition that God is love." Then we will see that our actual existence is, from the viewpoint of the inherited ontology of nature and grace, "mixed" from its origin and at every step, "a pilgrimage in which the miracle of divine love . . . is the most ordinary of events." "Nature" is always an abstraction from actual life, believing or pagan, and is an abstraction that only revelation can show us how to consider accurately; nature is the "remainder" left over when we have discovered "what in us is grace."

According to Rahner and Reno, theology does need to make this abstraction in order to identify the condition of the possibility of divine love's gratuity. Indeed, the whole philosophical enterprise is to be seen as an after-the-fact-of-grace abstraction that isolates theology's conditions of possibility.

FINALLY, the book can be taken as a systematic proposal, with Rahner recruited as the closest approach

thus far to what Reno advocates. And here I do have my doubts.

The proposal can be stated in the following steps. (1) A specifically Christian understanding of transcendence should be the conceptual stream bed of theology. (2) The controlling Christian proposition in this linguistic field should be that God in Christ transcends the difference between himself and creatures. (3) Nevertheless, systematically we should begin with *our* experience of transcendence, identifying in it "lines of stress and pressure" that we can then trace to their originating focus.

It is point (3) that awakens qualms. It sounds very much as though Reno shares with Rahner the famous distinction, in itself little adduced by Reno, between "transcendental" and "categorical" theology. In Rahner's practice, one first establishes the general transcendental conditions for the saving import of any particular; then one is in position to affirm such import, categorically, of the particular Christ. My colleague Bruce Marshall has convincingly argued that starting with general possibilities Rahner never really gets to the particular as particular; and Reno at the very end of his book says as much himself. But it is Reno's "intuition" that Rahner's failure is not the fault of his "architecture"; and it is the architecture that Reno thinks can be exemplary.

I have an opposite intuition, though to be sure it is no more than that. And one cannot demand everything of one book. But it is noteworthy that Reno also, at least in this book, never gets to that originating Christological point toward which he set out. The proposition that Rahner and Reno in fact use to press our understanding of transcendence is that "God is love." But this is decidedly not the same proposition as that God in Christ transcends himself toward us, not unless the former proposition is used merely as a slogan for an explicit trinitarian unpacking of the latter. It is thus probably not coincidental that "transcendence" is also of course a generality. Can any generality pro-

vide the appropriate structure of theology?

New Paradigms for Old

WHAT COMES NEXT. By JAMES P. PINKERTON. *Hyperion*. 404 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by John S. Gardner

FULL DISCLOSURE: I have known Jim Pinkerton as friend and colleague for eight years. Throughout that time, we have carried on an intellectual conversation about Burkean conservatism, libertarianism, and public policy.

Pinkerton served as Deputy Assistant for Policy Planning to President Bush and has worked in four presidential campaigns, but this is by no means a Washington "inside baseball" book, still less a kiss-and-tell memoir of the failings of three administrations. It is only secondarily a book about policies and primarily a book about philosophies—about the kinds of choices people and societies make about social organization that in turn influence the kinds of policies societies adopt.

Pinkerton's basic thesis is that the "Old Paradigm" of bureaucracy and bureaucratic control, dating from Bismarck but with far more ancient antecedents, will be replaced by a "New Paradigm" based on markets, personal freedom, and personal choice. From his reading of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1964), Pinkerton realized that American politics is currently in the midst of a paradigm shift, an intellectual revolution in the political sphere as profound as Copernicus' in astronomy, and that winning political leaders will adapt to the new realities of market-oriented control. Using a broad and witty analogy to computing, Pinkerton describes how the "Bureaucratic Operating System" has been upgraded over the centuries, refined in

JOHN S. GARDNER served as Special Assistant to the President and Assistant Staff Secretary for President Bush. He presently resides in New York City.

its transplantation to America, and is now being outmoded.

YET WHY DOES this book deserve to be reviewed in a journal of religion and public life?

First, many issues Pinkerton addresses—school choice, health care, changing employment patterns, the effect of computers on society—demand serious study by religiously committed Americans. This need is all the more urgent when the “Cyber Future” that Pinkerton describes as the alternative to the New Paradigm is so frightening: “canon-cracking, the end of the shared values that humanity has accumulated over the centuries.” He suggests that one plausible scenario in continuing along the Old Paradigm path is a polity rent along the fault lines of income and technological literacy, an atomistic, cold society in which “cyberpunk capitalism no longer needs ethics—because the gimlet gaze of technology makes up for it.”

More broadly, Pinkerton defines a paradigm as “a two-dollar word for the pattern of thinking around which human beings center their vision of reality.” Does this, or any other, new paradigm contain a role for religion? Does it reflect the fact that millions of Americans center their vision of reality—their paradigm—on God, looking not merely to earthly cities but to the heavenly city as well?

Refreshingly, Pinkerton rejects the intolerance of the “tolerant” that all too frequently manifests itself in contempt for religion. This is more the libertarianism of Vaclav Havel than of Jerry Garcia. The work breathes a humane spirit and a muckraking reformer’s earnest zeal for those whom the Old Paradigm has failed, none more so than the inhabitants of the inner cities. Rare among Republicans, Pinkerton has a deep understanding of precisely how the poor are affected by a changing economy, as in privatized “Edge Cities” where the affluent buy personal safety and efficient services while the poor are left with Old Paradigm bureaucracy.

The principles behind the New

Paradigm are essentially libertarian. Pinkerton generally favors a libertarian, market-oriented approach based on the principle of personal choice to both economic and social policy—school choice in education, vouchers and Medical Savings Accounts in health care, and (notably) gay marriage (which he unconvincingly defends as a conservative reform), all combining in the New Paradigm of “an upwardly spiralling fusion of radical conservative dialectic.”

SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, though, Pinkerton also understands the need to reinforce a sense of community in American life, both in terms of strengthening individual communities and strengthening the American community as a whole—though he frankly concedes the difficulty of restoring community in a world of the Internet and cocooning.

As Pinkerton describes it, religion and religious Americans have nothing to fear from a New Paradigm America. They would be truly left alone to work out their own salvation, and the hand of the state would not interfere in their choices. Choice in education would permit parents to educate their children as they see fit, and no one would have the right to silence religious voices in the public square.

This is not the ideal of a Ralph Reed or Daniel Lapin, but it is not unfriendly towards religion; indeed, religion and religious institutions have a vital role to play in filling the needs unmet by the bureaucratic paradigm. Pinkerton highlights how the Old Paradigm has spiritually impoverished people by quenching hopes and dreams and leaving them stultified under bureaucratic control.

The book offers much common ground for discussion if not always for agreement. A new focus on personal security and expanded federalism and privatization appeals to an age when it is difficult to imagine that the welfare system could be run worse by the States. Pinkerton provides an excellent analysis of the judicial system’s effect on public administration and decries “Vealoc-

racy,” the semi-privatized special interest politics that drives so much of Federal spending and decisionmaking. He enthusiastically supports the need to form as broad a political coalition as possible, observing the necessity of pushing areas of agreement such as “personal security” and “personal responsibility” to the top of the agenda of political concerns, and divisive issues like abortion and gay rights to the bottom.

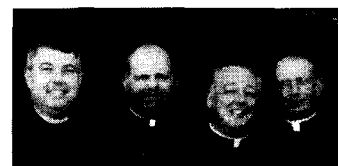
But one need not be an Old Paradigm cynic to see something unrealistic in this view of politics. It is difficult to see how a modern conservative leader could maintain political peace in the way that Franklin Roosevelt kept both labor unions and segregationists in the same coalition. No group willingly puts itself and its issues at the bottom of the agenda—especially groups that believe themselves to be marginalized in public discourse such as gays (or for that matter, evangeli-



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cals). Political issues do not resolve themselves so easily. Either gay marriage is legal or it is not. The law simply cannot respect both views of fundamental personal belief.

Yet even if Pinkerton's vision of a new politics is not entirely persuasive, he does convincingly argue that our current stalemate—a libertarian social ethos and statist political ethos—is fundamentally unstable. It may be impossible to return to a Victorian ideal of sharply limited government. But it is worth studying the transition between classical liberalism and Old Paradigm liberalism. In studying the history of that transition—and specifically in asking whether that transition can be reversed—one may discover whether the New Paradigm really is “what comes next.”

In any event, Pinkerton has written an important book. It is welcome for a libertarian to acknowledge the dangers of capitalism without ethics and to point the way to a capitalism based on real empowerment of the individual, opening economic opportunities in all sectors of society. Rightly or wrongly, the libertarian case is increasingly prominent in American political discourse, and it is nowhere better or more generously stated than here. Whether they rejoice or tremble at the prospect of the New Paradigm, those who wish to understand American society must understand Pinkerton's argument.

Tocqueville's Mirror

TOCQUEVILLE AND THE NATURE OF DEMOCRACY. By PIERRE MANENT. Translated by John Waggoner. Rowman & Littlefield. 148 pp. \$40 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Reviewed by Brian C. Anderson

“TO LOVE DEMOCRACY well, it is necessary to love it moderately.” So concludes French philosopher Pierre

BRIAN C. ANDERSON is Research Associate in Social and Political Studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Manent in *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, his meditation on the thought of the greatest political thinker of the nineteenth century. This elegant phrase carries the principal practical lesson of Tocqueville's teaching, a lesson that should be ignored by no one concerned with the future of the democratic experiment. Manent's book, the second of his major works to be translated into English, masterfully presents the story leading to that conclusion, showing how the great French aristocrat illumines three questions essential to our modern self-understanding: What is the nature of democracy? What are its effects on human nature? What must be done to preserve it, or mitigate its worst tendencies? Following the recent release of *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* as part of Princeton University Press' “New French Thought” series, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy* should underscore for an English-speaking audience Manent's reputation as the most important political philosopher working in France today.

Tocqueville came to America in May of 1831 seeking intellectual clarity about the essence of democracy, obscured from view in Europe by the terrible violence of the French Revolution. The journey gave birth, of course, to *Democracy in America*, the remarkable book forming the centerpiece of Manent's study. In America, Tocqueville could observe the democratic revolution working itself out in “a simple and easy manner.” He could see there the full extent of the democratic phenomenon, and discerned its “generative fact”: the equality of conditions.

The equality of conditions defines a social state where the influence of one man over another—central to the aristocratic regime—has been replaced with the egalitarian idea of individual consent. As Manent tersely puts it, “In such a society, the acts of each have only two legitimate sources: personal will or the general will.” The victory of consent over influence, and the elevation of human autonomy closely linked to it, has dramatic social and political effects,

leaving nothing as it was. Tocqueville felt “religious dread” when he contemplated the sublime force of this historical mutation, which he saw as Providential and in conformity with human nature. His exploration of the democratic universe was in part an attempt to master his fear.

MANENT carefully reconstructs Tocqueville's description of the democratic universe. Intellectual life would be substantially modified by democracy, as would the passions of men. Under pressure from individual autonomy, opinions would be relativized, mores softened. Public opinion becomes the sole authoritative voice. While individual rights govern the lives of men, the ends of man fall into neglect. The “moral contents of life” are emptied from the democratic vessel. The passion for equality, natural to democracy, trumps every other concern, and begins its endless struggle to eradicate the natural inequalities of men. It is not difficult to recognize ourselves in Tocqueville's mirror. What Manent stresses in Tocqueville is the tragic, and indeed paradoxical, realization that democracy is both natural to man and, if not moderated, destructive of human nature.

Allowed free reign, this passion for equality—a democratic “instinct”—undermines democracy itself. It does this, as Manent deftly relates, in several ways: by paradoxically recreating the state of nature, originally elaborated by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau as a pre-civilized condition, at the heart of democratic civilization; by spreading envy, corrosive of any regime; and by crowding out the “natural superiorities of reason and virtue.” Although Tocqueville understood the aristocratic regime to be unjust, based as it was on an unnatural convention of familial superiority, its hierarchical order still preserved room for standards transcending the individual will. The excellences of human nature were, at least potentially, and for the few, given room to breathe. The democratic regime threatens to obscure every reference point that transcends

the sovereign individual. When this occurs, Tocqueville suspected, democracy is doomed. We will no longer fathom the true, the good, or the beautiful, and our institutions will crumble.

The "democratic man" who tends to inhabit the regime is, as captured by Tocqueville, a strange creature: clamoring for rights, uncertain of his beliefs, obsessed with material gain (the only thing he can be certain of), anxious, solitary, and mediocre. His defects make him prey for the "soft" despotism Tocqueville so dreaded, a despotism of enervation, where liberty is abandoned and a bloated central power administers to the needs of an infantilized population. C. S. Lewis' "men without chests" are the natural denizens of the democratic regime.

Central to Tocqueville's purpose was to avoid a future where this soft despotism would reign triumphant, where human nature would be "domesticated." As Manent beautifully narrates, in accomplishing this purpose there could be no simple return to aristocracy:

On the one hand, democracy's project is unrealizable, because it is contrary to nature. On the other, it is impossible to stop short of this democracy and go back to aristocracy. This is because democratic equality also conforms to nature. It follows that we can only moderate democracy; we cannot stop short of democracy, because it fulfils nature. We cannot attain the end of this movement, for it would mean subjecting nature completely and dehumanizing man. We cannot escape democracy. We can never make democracy completely "real," and we must not try. We can and must moderate democracy, limit it, temper its hostility to nature, all the while benefiting from its conformity to nature. To affirm and will democracy insofar as it is in conformity with nature, to limit it insofar as it is contrary to it, such is the sovereign art on which depend

the prosperity and morality of democracies.

What is necessary to the preservation and flourishing of democracy—and we are all democrats now—is the prudential application of political artifice in order to tame and channel the natural instincts of democracy.

There is, then, Tocqueville reveals, a tragic aspect to democracy: its defects are generated by its very principles. The spectre of nihilism haunts the democratic mansion. But with the "propitious ruins of aristocracy," which had preserved the last deposits of premodern spiritual capital, now demolished, how are the destructive impulses of democracy to be moderated? From "whence will democracy draw the resources of reason and prudence that will rule its instincts?" Tocqueville's answer is well known: through the vitality of religious and other associations—what are today commonly referred to as "mediating institutions"—that occupy the region between the central power and the isolated individual. These associations may be religious, political, familial, or commercial, but they all serve to remove the individual from his isolation, and, at least ideally, teach him the meaning of democratic citizenship. The laws and institutions of democracy must respect and, where possible, brace the life of associations.

It is this practical teaching of Tocqueville that today finds resonance in Western democracies weary of the omnivorous state. But as Manent correctly emphasizes, Tocqueville was far less optimistic than many contemporary Tocquevillians about the possibility of "solving" the problem of democracy. It is recognized by most sensible observers that if our societies are to be renewed amidst the dislocations of late-twentieth-century life, it will be through a revived civil society. But what is to insure that civil society will not, in turn, be affected by the rage for equality? What if religion is reconstituted on a democratic basis? How could such a reconsti-

tuted religion, sharing the same motivating principle as the regime surrounding it, hold at bay the excesses logically entailed by that regime? Tocqueville acutely perceived the Sisyphean nature of moderating democracy in order to preserve the "prosperity and morality" of the democratic regime.

THE AFTERSHOCKS of the historical earthquake registered by Tocqueville are still being felt, as many of our recent cultural and political struggles illustrate. These conflicts oppose those who desire the complete democratization of existence, pushing an egalitarian individualism to the Promethean lengths of controlling the processes of life itself, to others upholding criteria of truth, good and evil, and beauty based on a transcendent ontological order. As Manent argues, in this work and elsewhere, democracy is silent on the most important question facing us—*Quid sit homo*—what is man? It therefore can provide no coherent answer to the question of the limitation of human will. It can provide no answer to those who, for reasons of efficiency or malevolence, want to dispose of society's weakest members—the aged and the unborn. It can provide no fertile source for the creation of beauty. It can provide, at best, only a pragmatic response to questions of truth or falsity. Thus we must love democracy moderately, since it does not deserve our absolute devotion.

In 1968 Manent's teacher and

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friend Raymond Aron published the remarkable book *Progress and Disillusion*. Tocquevillian in inspiration, Aron's argument ran against the libertine spirit of the age. It exhibited a rare wisdom about the limits of human perfectibility. Our modern societies are both more just and more dissatisfied than any yet known to man, Aron believed, and they were likely to be driven by a "ceaseless agitation"—for they both fulfill human nature and work against it—until they pass from existence. Manent's study of Tocqueville, ably translated by John Wagoner, is indeed, as Harvey Mansfield writes in his introduction, a "showpiece of political philosophy," for it reminds us of this wisdom. It also shows us how a nineteenth-century aristocrat may understand us better than we understand ourselves.

BRIEFLY NOTED

HANNAH ARENDT/MARTIN HEIDEGGER. By ELZBIETA ETTINGER. *Yale University Press*. 139 pp. \$16.

This slight volume has become the occasion of a media uproar. But the text is really too puny to sustain serious debate about how deep runs Hannah Arendt's philosophical indebtedness to Heidegger, or how tainted Heidegger's philosophy is by his muddled embrace of National Socialism. Rousseau abandoned his five children to foundling hospitals (and likely early death), but I daresay no thinking person would urge that we therefore burn *Emile*—although we may rightly think less of its author. Heidegger behaved horribly in the 1930s and offered no public condemnations of National Socialism in the postwar years. But these facts do not tell us either that there is a connection with his philosophy or that there isn't. The easiest interpretation of a thinker is either to collapse his person into his thought or separate them entirely, but easy interpretations don't seem right

here—for either Heidegger or Arendt. Arendt's intellectual debt to Heidegger is clear—she credits him for the philosophical framework of *The Human Condition* and other works. But this acknowledgment itself suggests that Heidegger's thought is compatible with a variety of political commitments, for Arendt was an antifascist and a great lover of the American revolution and founding. The moral high ground is very crowded these days, however, and points like this are not the ones seized upon by controversialists out for a cheap moral victory over Hannah Arendt. One newspaper called Ettinger's breathless tale a "Holocaust Scandal"; Eli Wiesel branded Arendt "arrogant" for daring to "forgive" Heidegger. Those of us at less Empyrean heights are left to ponder once again the complexities of human love. The affair and friendship seem mawkish at points, tawdry at others, and yet oddly affecting as well. So why the lynch mob? Perhaps great women thinkers are permitted fewer foibles and lapses than men, for the *only* charge against Arendt is that she loved wrongly and befriended badly. There is a good bit less in the Heidegger/Arendt relation than the press or Ettinger would have it. But there is a good bit more as well: an occasion to muse on the perplexities of friendship in a terrible and tumultuous time.

— Jean Bethke Elshtain

ZEN SPIRIT, CHRISTIAN SPIRIT: THE PLACE OF ZEN IN CHRISTIAN LIFE. By ROBERT E. KENNEDY. *Continuum*. 144 pp. \$15.95.

Robert Kennedy is a Jesuit, ordained in 1965 and so of the generation whose coming of age coincided with Vatican II. The Church into which he was ordained was soon transformed liturgically almost beyond recognition, and this transformation took from him, with anguish, the form of Catholicism with which he had grown up and which he had expected to last. For Kennedy, that loss has been partly made good by the study and practice of Zen Bud-

dhism. He has become a *sensei*, an authorized teacher and transmitter of Zen, and he understands this not as a replacement of his Catholic Christianity but rather as a new way of being Catholic. He is still a Jesuit and sees no tension or difficulty in bearing and representing both traditions. His book is partly a spiritual autobiography and partly a set of meditations on the spiritual life. It contains much good sense about prayer and meditation, and occasional passages of beauty and profundity. It is the work of a deeply thoughtful and compassionate man, and yet it is also full of pathos: in it, the Church is a supplicant, rudderless and poverty-stricken, seeking instruction in begging from Buddhists. She has nothing to offer and much to learn, and although Kennedy makes a spiritual virtue of this, it is difficult not to feel in it the agony of loss. Vatican II had many effects, not all of them expected; this book, and others like it, are an instance.

— Paul J. Griffiths

A WORLD RELIGIONS READER. Edited by IAN S. MARKHAM. *Blackwell*. 368 pp. \$54.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

A fine collection of basic texts woven together with informed and eminently readable commentary. High school teachers and those responsible for introductory college courses in religious studies will want to give this book a careful look.

UNSECCULAR MEDIA: MAKING NEWS OF RELIGION IN AMERICA. By MARK SILK. *University of Illinois Press*. 183 pp. \$19.95.

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* is where the author works, and he has obviously been paying close attention to both religion reporters and their critics. On balance, this somewhat sanguine analysis is on the side of the reporters. He offers suggestive proposals on the story lines (he calls them "topoi") that dominate the reporting of religion and how they might be stretched to include more of religion as it is understood and experienced by the religious.

JOHN HUME, PEACEMAKER. By GEORGE DROWER. *Victor Gollancz.* 221 pp. \$29.95.

An admiring profile of a Northern Ireland political leader who has been admirable in his steady hand and head throughout "the troubles." Hume is much more the leader of Catholics in the North than is the IRA's Gerry Adams, who is so undeservedly lionized in this country. Hume should be better known here. (Available from Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, Vermont 05053.)

THOMAS MORE: A PORTRAIT OF COURAGE. By GERARD B. WEGEMER. *Scepter (Princeton, NJ).* 307 pp. \$24.95.

THE ENGLISH PRAYERS OF SIR THOMAS MORE. *Templegate (Springfield, IL 62705).* Approx. 100 pp. \$9.95 paper.

Except for Abraham Lincoln, probably no political figure has inspired the Christian moral imagination more than Thomas More. It is hardly surprising, then, that More continues to inspire new scholarship and publication. A case in point is *Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage* by Gerard B. Wegemer. Wegemer, a devoted More scholar teaching at the University of Dallas, has produced an admiring and stylistically winsome profile in courage. This short book is itself very handsome and is elaborately annotated, which makes it not only a fine introduction to More but also to the vast literature about More. At the end of his life, More frequently expressed the desire to "be merry together in heaven" with those who were set upon destroying him, and Wegemer persuasively argues that this essential good humor was grounded in his supreme confidence that "All things work for good for those who love the Lord," even if they didn't love Thomas More. Also worth noting is *The English Prayers of Sir Thomas More*, which includes the prayers written while in the Tower of London in 1534, plus the Treatise on the Eucharist. Handsomely printed, this makes a very nice gift item for friends.

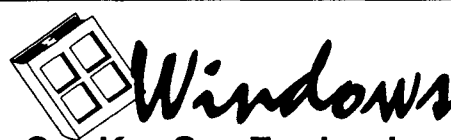
SAYING GOODBYE TO DANIEL: WHEN DEATH IS THE BEST CHOICE. By JULIET CASSUTO ROTHMAN. *Continuum.* 180 pp. \$18.95.

The author recounts the days following the injury of her son in a car wreck—an injury that led the author and her husband at last to agree to kill the young man by the removal of medical life support. Consolation exists where one finds it; far be it from these pages to complain when a mother finds solace for her grief. But this is not a good book: it drapes the reality of sorrow in a blanket of sociological jargon; it muffles the fact of death in a quilted comforter of moralizing about the right to die. To the pain of losing a son, anything—pagan rage, Stoic self-containment, Christian hope—is a better response than this arrangement in which a mother can be consoled only if other mothers terminate life support for their sons as well.

CHANGING WITNESS: CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND PUBLIC POLICY 1917-1994. By MICHAEL WARNER. *Eerdmans.* 202 pp. \$20 paper.

The author, who earned his doctorate in history under Martin E. Marty at the University of Chicago, offers an intelligently critical overview of the changing ways in which the U.S. bishops have attempted to address public policy questions, from the National Catholic War Council in the World War I era to today's National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and its operating arm, the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). In the first decades under study, the bishops tracked more or less closely papal social doctrine, especially that of Leo XIII and Pius XI, with its strong attachment to natural law and an organic view of society. This changed dramatically with Vatican Council II, and especially with the widespread theological rebellion against the 1968

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encyclical on human sexuality, *Humanae Vitae*. According to Warner, natural law was largely jettisoned in favor of secular notions of equality and liberation. The notion of justice found in Aristotle and Thomas, the rightly ordered society with each contributing to the common good, was displaced by justice defined as the battle against inequalities and the meeting of needs. Warner provides a helpful guide to the controversies over the two major pastoral letters of the 1980s, one on world peace and the other on the American economy, and argues that both—especially “The Challenge of Peace”—rested on ideological foundations that have been decisively discredited. Throughout the bishops’ “changing witness,” abortion has had a stated primacy among NCCB concerns but its importance has in fact been sharply relativized by being joined to a farrago of other issues—presented in the name of a “consistent life ethic”—and this has consistently weighted the bishops’ witness toward the left of the political spectrum. Warner clearly does not share the political biases of the bishops conference, but his more telling point is that missing from the many statements is any clear theological witness to Christ as the fulfillment of the human project. This is in sharpest contrast to the social encyclicals and other teaching documents of the pontificate of John Paul II, which Warner says the U.S. bishops should emulate. Because of the bureaucratic structure of NCCB-USCC, the political prejudices of those in charge, and the inability of individual bishops to give in-depth attention to the statements that go out in their name, Warner is not at all hopeful that the problems described in *Changing Witness* will be effectively addressed any time soon.

SAINTS AND SCHEMERS: OPUS DEI AND ITS PARADOXES. By JOAN ESTRUCH. Oxford University Press. 302 pp. \$30.

This peculiar book was prompted by the suggestion of our colleague Peter Berger that Mr. Estruch should pursue his hunch that the

role of Opus Dei in the modernization of Spain (under and after Franco) might suggest some interesting variations on Max Weber’s well-known argument about capitalism and the Protestant ethic. As Estruch got into his project, however, Weber and social theory quickly took a back seat to the author’s interest in how the members of Opus Dei have regularly engaged in radical historical revisionism in telling the story of the organization and its founder, Blessed Josemaria Escriva (who died in 1975 and was beatified by John Paul II in 1992). The author insists that his is not simply another attack on Opus Dei, but he does not successfully conceal his deep suspicion of the movement. Nonetheless, he does make valuable contributions in showing how Escriva and his followers changed their purposes after the founding of Opus (which Estruch says was in 1939, not in 1928, as the official story has it), and in demonstrating the excesses—if not outright prevarications—indulged by Escriva’s hagiographers. Of particular interest is the author’s tracing of the roots of the long-standing enmity between Opus and the Jesuits. According to Estruch, the Jesuits in Spain were the true reactionaries who were threatened by the renewal efforts of Escriva and his companions to challenge the long-standing Jesuit monopoly on tutoring the powerful and promising of Spanish society. In Spain and elsewhere, the Jesuits today have largely abdicated that role, as well as their status as the “shock troops” of the papacy, and Opus has replaced them on both scores. Opus members will not be pleased, however, with Estruch’s further argument that there was very little that was original in Blessed Josemaria’s vision, a great deal of it having been stolen from the Jesuits. Only toward the end does Estruch get a bit hysterical when he suggests that Opus may be exercising undue influence over this pontificate. He notes that Opus people and John Paul II frequently use the same vocabulary, which is hardly surprising since they’re both seriously Catholic. As for Max Weber, Estruch

adds to a thousand others yet another demonstration that Protestantism has no monopoly on the spirit of capitalism. The book is of interest, however, for what it says about the history and current self-understandings of Opus Dei, quite apart from sociological theory.

A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM. By MARTIN E. MARTY. Thomas More. 231 pp. \$10.95.

Pretty much what the title says. A useful and sympathetic overview by one of the leading Protestant observers of the religious scene. Marty’s usual light touch does not fail him as he limns the possible and promising at the beginning of Catholicism’s next half millennium in North America.

FAITH ALONE: THE EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION. By R. C. SPROUL. Baker. 221 pp. \$15.99.

Sproul has been the foremost theological polemicist against “Evangelicals and Catholics Together,” the document initiated by Charles Colson and R. J. Neuhaus and issued in the spring of 1994. While Sproul’s rigorist position has isolated him from many evangelical colleagues and contributed to his departure from Reformed Theological Seminary in Florida, he is also viewed by others as a champion of Protestant orthodoxy doing battle with Protestants who have gone soft on Catholicism. The present book, including a glossary of Latin terms for the layman, is a useful exposition of a Calvinist sixteenth-century understanding of justification. Sproul’s argument is deeply flawed by an unwillingness to credit both Catholic and Protestant theological developments since then. If Sproul’s view of justification by faith alone really does define the true church, it is a fast shrinking church, as he seems to acknowledge in his wistful reflections on the decline of what he believes to be authentic Protestantism. A brittle, bitter, and finally very sad book.

REACHING OUT WITHOUT DUMBING DOWN. By MARVA J. DAWN. *Eerdmans*. 316 pp. \$16.95 paper.

An insightful treatment of the "worship wars" that afflict many Protestant denominations and are being felt also among Catholics. The author's theological analysis is serious but accessible, and she provides much-needed help in understanding why worship that is really the worship of God cannot be compromised to the goal of "church growth." No friend of traditionalism, Dawn knows the most astute appreciation of contemporary culture cannot be a substitute for a solid grounding in authentic Christian tradition. An important book.

TRUTH ON TRIAL: LIBERAL EDUCATION BE HANGED. By ROBERT K. CARLSON. *Crisis (Washington, D.C.)*. 201 pp. \$13.95 paper.

Inveighing he does go, through the rotten fields of contemporary higher education. But it is more often than not a delight to follow an author who does not lose his style when he gets his dander up. The story turns around the Integrated Humanities Program at the University of Kansas, which was an enormous success and therefore focused the wrath of the peddlers of the truth that there is no truth. The author says he was inspired by Bill Bennett, who said, "Get mad and get in the fight." Carlson has unquestionably acted upon that counsel, with the result that a good many others may be moved to go and do likewise.

DANCE OF A FALLEN MONK. By GEORGE FOWLER. *Addison-Wesley*. 310 pp. \$23.

In a long line of escape-from-the-convent tales, the new twist is to discover the inner child or, in Mr. Fowler's case, the "inner dance" that had for so long been oppressed by the horrors of organized religion (the subtitle is "The Twists and Turns of a Spiritual Life," and the allegedly awful religion the author encountered was in a Trappist monastery). We are told that he suf-

fered "excommunication from the Catholic Church for marrying a nun," which is not and has never been grounds for excommunication. Whatever the reason for his excommunication, if in fact he was excommunicated, Mr. Fowler wants the world to know that he is extremely pleased with his discovery of his authentic self. He writes, "This book is about everybody's dance." Not quite.

ROMAN CATHOLICS AND EVANGELICALS: AGREEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES. By NORMAN GEISLER and RALPH E. MACKENZIE. *Baker*. 538 pp. \$24.99 paper.

One of several volumes prompted from the evangelical Protestant side by the 1994 declaration, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." Inevitably, different readers will think the authors are too critical or too sympathetic toward Roman Catholicism, but they mani-

festly strive to be fair. The book can be warmly recommended to study groups including Protestants and Catholics, with the proviso that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* be kept close at hand.

HANDBOOK OF DENOMINATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. By FRANK S. MEAD. *Abingdon*. 352 pp. \$15.95.

The tenth edition of a once-overlightly but generally reliable guide to background, membership, and polity of the maddening variety of churches in the U.S. The bias is touchingly Protestant. The Unitarian Universalist Association, with less than two hundred thousand members, gets 4.3 pages; the United Church of Christ, with 1.5 million, gets eleven pages; the Methodists, with thirteen million in the U.S. and eighteen million worldwide, get thirteen pages; and the Roman Catholic Church, with sixty million in the U.S. and a billion worldwide,

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gets 7.5 pages. The entry on the last concludes with the jejune observation, "These are indeed tense and critical times for this historic church."

COSMOS IN THE CHAOS: PHILIP SCHAFF'S INTERPRETATION OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN RELIGION. By STEPHEN GRAHAM. *Eerdmans*. 266 pp. \$22 paper.

Schaff was the foremost Protestant church historian in the late nineteenth century and something of an ecumaniac (to use a much later term). He envisioned a "glorious union" of the churches in which Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy would play a leading role in what he

viewed as an essentially Protestant (and Reformed) culture. Schaff affirmed an "evangelical catholic" Christianity that still resonates in some circles today.

THE MORAL CHALLENGE OF ALZHEIMER DISEASE. By STEPHEN G. POST. *Johns Hopkins University Press*. 143 pp. \$29.95.

An intelligent and morally informed treatment of dementia in the aged, of which Alzheimer Disease is the most publicized. Post, who teaches ethics at Case Western Reserve, offers practical counsel and a hopeful approach to possible cures. Throughout, his argument is against "preemptive suicide" and

other steps that let families and physicians abandon their obligation to care.

LET US PRAY: A PLEA FOR PRAYER IN OUR SCHOOLS. By WILLIAM J. MURRAY. *Morrow*. 205 pp. \$20.

On behalf of her son, Madalyn Murray O'Hair took her war against school prayer to the Supreme Court, and in June of 1963 she won. Now her son, a committed Christian, argues for the restoration of voluntary prayer in the public schools. He makes the case in an informed but popular manner that many will no doubt find persuasive as the Congress acts to restore school prayer.

ON AMERICA. Some thought must be given to the special development in the Anglo-Saxon countries and particularly in America. The American Revolution was almost contemporary with the French one, and politically the two were not unconnected; yet they were profoundly different in character. The American democracy is not founded upon the emancipated man but, quite on the contrary, upon the kingdom of God and the limitation of all earthly powers by the sovereignty of God. It is indeed significant when, in contrast to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, American historians can say that the federal constitution was written by men who were conscious of original sin and of the wickedness of the human heart. Earthly wielders of authority, and also the people, are directed into their proper bounds, in due consideration of man's innate longing for power and of the fact that power pertains only to God. With these ideas, which derive from Calvinism, there is combined the essentially contrary idea which comes from the spiritualism of the Dissenters who took refuge in America, the idea that the kingdom of God on earth cannot be built by the authority of the state but only by the congregation of the faithful. The Church proclaims the principles of the social and political order, and the state makes available the technical means for putting them into effect. These two quite alien lines of thought converge in the demand for democracy, and it is enthusiastic spiritualism that becomes the determining factor in American thought. This explains the remarkable fact that on the European continent it has never been possible to find a Christian basis for democracy, while in the Anglo-Saxon countries democracy and democracy alone is regarded as the Christian form of the state. The persecution and expulsion of the spiritualists from the Continent has in this respect been fraught with the most far-reaching political consequences. If in spite of this the Anglo-Saxon countries, too, are suffering from severe symptoms of secularization, the cause does not lie in the misinterpretation of the distinction between the two offices or kingdoms, but rather in the reverse of this, in the failure of the enthusiasts to distinguish at all between the office or kingdom of the state and the office or kingdom of the Church. The claim of the congregation of the faithful to build the world with Christian principles ends only with the total capitulation of the Church to the world. . . . If this does not involve a radical hostility to the Church, that is only because no real distinction has ever been drawn here between the offices of Church and state. Godlessness remains more covert. And indeed in this way it deprives the Church even of the blessing of suffering and of the possible rebirth which suffering may engender.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

WHO YOU ARE II

We did it in 1992, and now we've gone and done it again. After five full years of publication, we thought it time to survey our subscribers once more. We thank all of you who received the detailed questionnaire and took the time to answer our questions. Of course such a survey cannot tell us who *you* are in all your irreducible singularity. But it does offer a statistical profile of subscribers to FT, and I thought you might be as interested in the results as we are. To tell the truth, the results are not all that different from 1992, which is another indication that the readership is pretty stable. (That, we are told, is good. In marketing terms, it means FT has found its "niche.") Of course there are many more readers now than there were in 1992.

I will take the items as they come in the report, not necessarily in order of importance. (The plus and minus signs in parenthesis indicate changes from 1992.) And please note that we're talking about *subscribers*. As we shall see, there are many more readers than subscribers, despite our best efforts to get the freeloaders to subscribe. First, you are (collectively speaking) 85 percent male and 15 percent female. We don't take that too seriously, however. Many subscribers are "Mr. and Mrs.," and it seems that in most households it is the husband's job to fill out questionnaires, women having more important things to do.

Forty-two percent of you are Roman Catholic (+2), 49 percent are Protestant (-5), and 8 percent are "Other" (+2). The Jewish readership is still much lower than we would like, and we don't know how to explain that. Given all the evidence that Jews are unusually big on reading, and given the level of Jewish participation in institute programs and in

FT, one would expect that we would have more Jewish readers than simply the proportion of Jews in the general population. We'll keep working at it, and will in no way reduce the attention given to the Jewish-Christian connection, which is crucial to the religious and cultural renewal that FT seeks to advance.

We're pleased that the Protestant-Catholic ratio has remained quite steady. In view of the high-profile ecclesial transition of the Editor-in-Chief, there was a worry about a possible Protestant drop-off, but that hasn't happened. FT will continue to be determinedly ecumenical. Among Protestants, the denominational distribution is like this: 20 percent Presbyterian (-5), 20 percent Lutheran (+2), 14 percent Episcopalian, 14 percent Baptist (+7), 10 percent Methodist (+3), and 19 percent "Other" (-6). One percent are Eastern Orthodox. Relative to their percentage of the general population, Presbyterians are high and Episcopalians are very high. (I'm speaking here about the number of subscribers.) One can speculate that the increase in Baptists and Methodists may be related to FT's increased attention to evangelicals in the last three years.

Eighty-eight percent of all subscribers attend church once a week or more, and another 5 percent attend at least once a month. Eighty-two percent say they pray once a day or more, and another 9 percent pray two or three times per week. Fifty-eight percent hold a leadership position in their church.

Comments sent back indicate that some respondents were not happy with the categories we proposed, but, when asked about their theological orientation, 7 percent checked charismatic, 62 percent conservative/traditionalist, 21 percent evangelical Protestant, 7 percent liberal, 2 percent fundamentalist, and 1 percent New Age. We'll have to work at refining that question, but if we assume that conservative/traditionalist and evangelical Protestant fall on the conservative end of the spectrum (which may not be a safe assumption about all evangelicals), it would seem that 83 percent of you consider yourselves theologically conservative.

Liberals & Conservatives

In trying to determine the "fit" between how subscribers view themselves and how they view FT, we used a number of questions in which respondents rated themselves and FT on a scale of one to ten.

Fifty-one percent think FT is strongly conservative theologically, while 59 percent rate themselves that way. Similarly, 49 percent say FT is strongly conservative politically, while 56 percent identify themselves that way. So it would seem that a majority of readers think FT is somewhat less conservative both theologically and politically than they are. Five percent of readers say they are, both theologically and politically, strongly liberal.

As I say, there's a great deal of uneasiness these days about what is meant by conservative and liberal, and you can do numerous variations in crunching the numbers from a survey such as this. On a scale of 1 to 10, for instance, 1, 2, and 3 would be "strongly" liberal and 8, 9, and 10 represent "strongly" conservative. Thus 4, 5, 6, and 7 represent something like the "moderate" range. By that measure, 48 percent of respondents say that FT is, theologically and politically, in the moderate range, but it is moderation tilted clearly toward the conservative side of things.

Another complicating factor is that the L-word is so unpopular now that, as has been demonstrated in several other surveys, even in liberal circles liberals hesitate to call themselves liberals. In such circles, however, there is an equal or stronger reluctance to identify oneself as a conservative. Some analysts say that anyone today who does not assertively call himself a conservative is in fact a liberal. Crunching the numbers by that rule (about which I have my doubts), 45 percent of FT subscribers are liberals of one sort or another, which is counterintuitive. And I haven't mentioned the additional factor that theological self-ratings depend, to a significant extent, on one's ecclesial placement. To cite an obvious instance, to be a liberal in the Southern Baptist Convention is very different from being a liberal in the Episcopal Church. So the usual dash of salt is in order for these findings on liberal/conservative propensities.

Confusions & Curiosities

Asked to write in who is "the most influential religious figure in America today," 38 percent of Catholics and 17 percent of Protestants said John Paul II. Obviously, we should have said "American religious figure." Billy Graham got the vote of 13 percent of Catholics and 42 percent of Protestants, with John Cardinal O'Connor coming next (19 and 1 percent), followed by Pat Robertson (3 and 6 percent), James Dobson (2 and 9 percent), and then, trailing off, Richard John Neuhaus, Charles Colson, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, and Mother Angelica. An office wag notes that I tied with Jesus, both of us being named more often by Protestants than by Catholics. Some things are better left unanalyzed.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents are age fifty-five or above (+8), which of course means that 41 percent (-8) are under fifty-five. Part of the graying of the

readership is that steady subscribers are now three years older than they were in 1992, but we don't know how to account for the other 5 percent increase in age. We're not really worried about it. Some of us think that fifty-five or sixty is the peak of life and professional influence, and FT is designed for "influentials." But we probably should be doing something—although we know not just what—to reach younger readers.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents are married, 6 percent (+5) are divorced or separated, 21 percent (-5) have never been married, and 4 percent are widowed. The "never married" category is larger than might be expected because of the number of priest subscribers. Subscribers are a very highly educated lot, with 24 percent (-9) having a Ph. D. or equivalent, and another 41 percent (+10) having a masters degree. So that's 65 percent with a postgraduate degree. Three percent did not go to college. Fourteen percent (-20) of respondents say they are currently in graduate courses, seminary, or other post-college study.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents are currently employed, 28 percent (+7) are retired, and 3 percent are unemployed. More Protestants are employed than Catholics (74-61) and more Catholics are retired than Protestants (38-22). At 25 percent (-4), the largest occupational group is clergy, with "professor," "teacher," "business," "editor/writer," and "lawyer" following in that order. Forty-seven percent are professionally in the business of producing and communicating ideas. (Fifty-two percent if you count lawyers.) Sixteen percent of Catholic subscribers are clergy, compared with 35 percent of Protestants. This is not surprising if one keeps in mind that the clergy-laity ratio among Protestants is more than three times higher than among Catholics.

Thirty percent of subscribers live in the Northeast, 11 percent on the West Coast, 18 percent in the South, and 28 percent in the Midwest. Most journals of intellectual seriousness have a much stronger concentration on the two coasts. The difference with FT, it is reasonable to suppose, is the "religion factor." Moving on to other things, 67 percent of respondents own their principal residence, and 39 percent have children at home, with 38 percent of those children being preschool or in elementary school. Twenty-one percent of all children of respondents are considering attending a Christian college or seminary.

Despite the 25 percent of clergy, who are generally lower-paid, subscribers are an affluent lot. Six percent have a total household income of \$250,000 or more, and 31 percent are over \$75,000. Eleven percent report a household income of less than \$25,000. Although we didn't ask the 1992 question in quite the same way, it is evident that, taking inflation into account, subscribers are more affluent now than

then. That likely correlates with the fact that they are, on average, somewhat older. Eighteen percent of subscribers have been with us since the very first issue, and 56 percent have subscribed for more than two years, which is about what one would expect in view of subscription growth and FT's very high renewal rates.

What You Read

Seventy-six percent say they read everything or most everything in each issue. Respondents were asked to rate their favorite sections in FT. (Since sections were rated separately, the total is considerably more than 100 percent.) Fifty-seven percent gave top ratings to the articles, 15 percent to correspondence, 8 percent to the "This Time" column, 3 percent to poetry, 22 percent to book reviews, 32 percent to editorials, 29 percent to opinion pieces, and 71 percent to "The Public Square." Obviously, the poetry is not a big favorite among our readers, and we're not entirely surprised. This reflects the status of poetry in today's culture, but also the fact that, despite the heroic efforts of poetry editor Jill Baumgaertner, great poetry is hard to find. It is said that there are more people today writing poetry than reading poetry. Were there more great poems, one expects there would be more people reading poetry. We're thinking about what might be done about this.

Eighty-eight percent report that they spend two hours or more reading each issue, with 36 percent spending four hours or more. (A doctor writes to complain that her practice is suffering because she takes out two days for each issue.) Sixty-six percent save their issues after reading them, while 24 percent pass them on to others or donate them to a library. The editors are shocked, *shocked*, that 10 percent discard their issues after reading them. Sixty-one percent report that their issues are read by two or more people. And of course there is much copying for use in classrooms and study groups, plus passing around of individual items. This is the multiplier effect which is very important to the influence of a journal. The publishing rule of thumb for a journal such as FT is that there are four readers for every subscriber, which means that, for instance, 30,000 subscribers translates into 120,000 readers. That is a rough estimate; it could be more or less, and is obviously more when items are reprinted in other publications. (We are very generous in giving reprint permission, but please note that we do like to be asked.)

FT readers are also voracious readers of books. Ninety-five percent report that, on average, they read one or more books per month, with 49 percent reading three or more. Sixty-three percent buy ten books or more per year, with 22 percent buying thirty or more. Seventy percent have joined a book club at

some time, and 35 percent are members of a club now. As to what people read, the top areas of interest are religion, politics, and theology, with strong showings for history, social issues, and philosophy.

On average, respondents subscribe to 3.4 magazines other than FT. The list goes on and on, many of them being professional publications. Publications to which 5 percent or more of respondents subscribe are: *American Spectator* (5), *Christianity Today* (6), *National Review* (8), *U.S. News & World Report* (6), and *Newsweek* (5). Of publications that address the mix of questions similar to those addressed by FT, 3 percent subscribe to *America*, 3 to *Catholic World Report*, 2 to *Commonweal*, 2 to *New Republic*, 2 to *American Scholar*, 4 to *Atlantic Monthly*, 2 to *Christian Century*, 2 to *Commentary*, 3 to *New Oxford Review*, 2 to *Chronicles*, and 2 to *Crisis*.

Almost without exception, only Catholics subscribe to the Catholic publications and only Protestants to the Protestant ones. While only 2 percent subscribe to *Christian Century* and *Crisis*, it appears they are enthusiastic subscribers, since two percent also rate those as their favorite magazines. Of the more than 380 magazines mentioned by readers, 36 percent of our subscribers report that FT is their favorite publication. And when we eliminate the hobby, entertainment, travel, sports, and unrelated professional magazines, it seems that FT is almost everybody's favorite, which is very gratifying indeed.

A few more snippets from the survey. Fifty-one percent of you addressed a public forum in the past year, 54 percent wrote a letter to the editor, 88 percent are involved in civic or charitable activities, 11 percent in work for a political party, 64 percent are Republican, 20 percent Democrat, and 16 percent belong to another or no party. Ninety-three percent voted in the 1994 Congressional election. As for leisure activities, travel, music concerts, sports, and gardening rate high, but everything else is swamped by reading, which 85 percent rate as their top leisure activity. Only 15 percent put television near the top, slightly under movies at 17 percent. As for music, you are big classical buffs (73 percent). Interest descends through jazz, opera, and country until it gets to rock music at 11 percent. Twenty-four percent of you bought ten or more records, tapes, or CDs in the past year. Forty-five percent made ten or more purchases by mail at an average price per purchase of \$40 or more. Sixty-nine percent have a personal computer, and 44 percent spent more than \$100 on software last year. Seventy-two percent took at least one domestic flight and 29 percent flew overseas in the past year.

Sorting Things Out

I'm not sure what to make of all this, but I confess that my interest in who out there is reading the

journal is near insatiable. I get to meet some of you personally when speaking around the country. You always have such nice things to say about FT, and that's a great encouragement. I have an uneasiness, though. This is a very big country, and the number of people who read anything serious is relatively small. But should it be worrying that there is so little overlap among readerships of different publications?

I started to count the other day, and stopped at sixty-four periodicals that I read more or less regularly. Of course that's crazy, but it's a craziness that attends a perhaps obsessive need to be "on top of" different conversations—and a need to churn out all the words for this section and other forums each month. Numerous comments from readers indicate that many count on *The Public Square* to keep them abreast of what is being said elsewhere, which is fine. But I still wonder about these many discrete and apparently quite separate conversations that are going on.

That's what a journal is, a conversation. It seems there are these many conversations—FT, *Commentary*, *Christian Century*, *American Scholar*, *Commonweal*—passing like ships in the night. Even with much larger circulation magazines such as *New Republic* and *National Review*, there is very little overlap. Mass circulation magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* can declare something to be the very epicenter of the national consciousness that week, and the overwhelming majority of people are quite unaware of it. Perhaps it has always been that way, and we kid ourselves when we think that there is a national conversation about anything.

And yet I suspect there is something like a national conversation about the mix of questions involved in religion, culture, society, and politics. The conversation is certainly not through television or newspapers, which are mostly just bulletin boards on which people paste notices about a relatively few things that are happening. What is something like a conversation is FT and similar publications in which writers who are engaged in other conversations set forth their views, enabling readers to get an indirect account of what is being said elsewhere. It is a little like television surfing where you hit on a channel that is itself surfing but has access to more channels than you do, or like an Internet site that serves as a clearinghouse for numerous other sites.

A homelier analogy is a small town where, if one hangs out at Frank's General Store, one will sooner or later learn about almost everything of interest that is said or done in the town. It is probably the congeniality of the company—meaning, very importantly, a respect for the intelligence of those involved in the conversation—that most determines where one hangs out. In any event, the editors and writers of FT are grateful that so many of you have decided to hang out here.

There is room for a lot more regulars, however. Here we have a problem. We enlist new subscribers primarily through direct mail solicitation. For that you need lists, mainly obtained from other periodicals, of people who would likely be interested in FT. The many lists we have used during the past five years are like the "burned over" territories of nineteenth-century evangelism; most of those who are winnable have been won. Subscription growth in the future will depend more and more upon you who are already subscribers. Gift subscriptions, talking up FT with friends and associates, sending us names of potential subscribers to whom we can send a complimentary copy—these things are important. If you can put them to good use, perhaps at your local church or study group, we'll gladly send you brochures describing FT. In sum, we have to depend upon your interest to interest others who should be part of the conversation. How many are out there? We have no idea. But then, five years ago we didn't know that so many of you were out there either.

FT

THE "LESSONS" OF VIETNAM

With the debate over the U.S. role in Bosnia, there is once again much fretting over "the Vietnam syndrome." President Bush said after the Gulf War that the syndrome had finally been put behind us. President Reagan said much the same at different times. Of course they were wrong. The explanation of why they were wrong is one of the many contributions of a new book by Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (St. Martins, \$24.95).

The Vietnam syndrome, albeit in changing permutations, will be with us for a long time. Garfinkle writes: "Consider the fact that between 1959 and 1975—the first and last years that there were U.S. casualties in Vietnam—about sixty million Americans turned eighteen years of age. In 2020 these generational cohorts will be at the height of their social power. At least four presidential elections may be influenced decisively by them, the first one having been in 1992. What they learned from their seminal political experience—the Vietnam War and the antiwar movement—is therefore of more than marginal importance." (The figures don't quite work, since someone who turned eighteen in 1959 will be seventy-nine in 2020, but the point is clear enough.)

The author's tone of understatement gives added credibility to what is certainly one of the more

important books written about the Vietnam experience. Garfinkle, who is a resident scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, has to make an effort to maintain that tone in describing the conceits and self-serving lies of the radical antiwar movement of the era. Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Jane Fonda, Stokely Carmichael—although Garfinkle does not put it quite this way, he has come to despise them all. One gathers he came to that view reluctantly. He despises them not because they prevented the U.S. from “winning” in Vietnam. It is the burden of his book that the radical antiwar movement had very little bearing on the outcome of the war; if anything, it may have protracted U.S. involvement in Vietnam. No, he despises that radical clique because of what it did to a generation of young Americans, with consequences that will reverberate through decades to come, and because of what it did to liberalism in America, and especially to the Democratic Party.

The central boast of Hayden and company is that it was their historic achievement to have stopped the war in Vietnam. In these pages, witness after witness comes forward, many of them from tenured perches in elite universities, to declare that, whatever may have been wrong with what they did in the sixties, they ended the war in Vietnam. “You can’t take that away from us,” they defiantly assert. And that is precisely what Garfinkle intends to take away from them, and for the most part he succeeds.

The Turning of Opinion

In the years prior to the emergence of the radical antiwar movement in 1965, according to Garfinkle, the military policies pursued under Kennedy and Johnson were both confused and ineffectual. Nonetheless, U.S. actions in Vietnam had overwhelming public support at home, and Lyndon Johnson used public antipathy to the radicals in order to increase that support. Only with the media’s misrepresentation of the 1968 Tet offensive as a U.S. defeat, and, more definitively, with Johnson’s March 31, 1968 speech suggesting that commitment to the war was under reappraisal, and announcing that he would not run for reelection, did public opinion begin to turn against the war. The stepping back from the war that Johnson began was completed by Nixon and Kissinger. Not, says Garfinkle, because of pressure from the antiwar movement but because Nixon and Kissinger viewed Vietnam as an inconvenient obstacle that stood in the way of their more ambitious strategy for a global realignment of power.

Garfinkle makes his case persuasively, but on at least one important point he is less than convincing. Throughout, he tries to make a clear distinction between the “radical” and “liberal” (sometimes he says “right liberal”) antiwar movements. He

describes with intelligent relish the arcane conflicts and internecine wars within the radical factions—the socialists, communists, anarchists, pacifists, counterculturalists, and how they were variously entangled with the rock and drug worlds bequeathed to us by the Woodstock Nation. His contention that that conglomeration of radicalisms did little or nothing to end the war, and maybe even prolonged it, is persuasive.

But he seems not to know quite what to do with that other antiwar movement of the liberals and right liberals. At this point I must declare interest, for I was intensely engaged in some of the organizations discussed by Garfinkle. I was for years on the national board of SANE, the organization most publicly associated with Norman Cousins, Norman Thomas, and Dr. Benjamin Spock. (To my later regret, I sided with Spock against Cousins in opening SANE to the left, which led to its eventual assimilation into the anti-Amerika posture of the radicals.) And, in the fall of 1964, Fr. Daniel Berrigan, the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and I started Clergy Concerned About Vietnam (later called Clergy and Laity Concerned [CALC], which also veered sharply to the left by 1971, after I had withdrawn from a leadership role).

Garfinkle seems ambivalent about the more liberal and “establishment” antiwar movement represented by SANE and CALC. In his account, such organizations segue into the discussion of “Congressional antiwar influence” as exercised by, for instance, Senators William Fulbright and Mark Hatfield. It is true that “our” part of the antiwar movement, although it had its moments of high drama, was not nearly so colorful as the countercultural antics of the Yippies, Maoists, Motherf-----, and assorted anarchists. But it takes a contorted redefinition of influence to deny that the liberal pressure against the war had a significant bearing, for better or for worse, on decision-making.

Prior to the abandonment of fixed war aims in his March 1968 speech, Johnson was consulting regularly with the “Wise Men”—including Dean Acheson, George Ball, McGeorge Bundy, General Omar Bradley, John J. McCloy, and Arthur Goldberg. Garfinkle attributes to the Wise Men great influence in turning Johnson against the war, and rightly so. But he suggests that the antiwar movement had little or no impact on their thinking. “If anything, the movement served as a once- or twice-removed psychological factor in the irresoluteness of a small group of important people already tormented by their own doubts.”

Well, yes, but psychological factors are what inner torment is about. We know from their public and private statements that some of these men were deeply anxious about what was happening in the streets, and especially on the campuses. Moreover, most of them were very much part of the world of

liberal discourse (as “liberal” was then understood) and were in regular conversation with people in what Garfinkle calls the “liberal right” antiwar movement. Then too, the slogan of the radicals, “We Are Your Children,” had a good measure of truth. They were disproportionately the children of the affluent and powerful; and their elders in the elite were not only eager to appease them but also to “identify” with their protest as an expression of moral idealism.

Overlappings

I confess I found myself cheering Garfinkle on in his attack against the radical anti-Amerikanists. They were an awful pain in the neck—self-important, self-righteous, self-indulgent, dime-store nihilists. Yet the overlap between liberals, “radicalized” liberals, and all-out leftists and revolutionaries (both political and cultural revolutionaries) was greater than Garfinkle usually allows, as was the overlap between that confused combination of antiwar pressure and decisions about war policy. Moreover, in that confused combination Garfinkle generally neglects the role of religious organizations. Not simply groups such as CALC, but the powerful organizational and cultural force of almost all the oldline churches of the time. At points Garfinkle acknowledges this neglect of religion, explaining that his chief interest is in the radicals, and for them the movement *was* their religion.

About that he is entirely right. I recall a bizarre meeting of CALC, when it was fast turning to the left, in which the proposal was seriously debated whether CALC should declare itself to be a church, since that is where thousands of people found their real “spiritual meaning.” Garfinkle is especially good in detailing the ways in which the radical antiwar movement peaked at the Chicago convention of 1968 and then fell into faction-ridden disarray. More attention might have been paid, however, to the fact that the largest, best-financed, and most stable organizational base for radical politics continued to be the liberal churches and ancillary institutions. He quotes Michael Ferber, a radical activist who wrote in the *Nation* in 1987, “The religious left is the only left we’ve got.” Not all the countercultural enthusiasms but certainly the politics of 1968 had a long afterlife in the churches. In some ghettoized religious circles, it is still 1968, although what goes on in such circles has in recent years been overshadowed by political activism on the conservative end of the religious spectrum.

Why It Happened

So who lost Vietnam? Or does that question make any sense? Here is Garfinkle’s answer: “The antiwar movement neither lost the war nor caused the

subsequent bloodbath in Southeast Asia. In the broadest sense, the war was lost because the American ship of state itself had lost its bearings. The expansion of containment to Asia and its post-Korean War militarization merged with a rapidly expanding economic base to produce a level of American hubris that was bound to send its ship of state onto the rocks sooner or later. However morally motivated, the U.S. commitment to Vietnam was strategically unsound; thus, even had the war been won the costs might well have exceeded any strategic benefits. But the war was not won because U.S. administrative, diplomatic, and especially military strategies failed. In other words, even beyond a flawed decision to commit itself, which flowed from the lack of a realistic strategy for containing polycentric communism in the geostrategic peripheries of the Cold War, the Vietnam War was lost by some combination of the U.S. military’s inability to adapt to politico-military counterinsurgency warfare, ill-advised micromanagement of the war by Pentagon civilians, and maladroitness meddling in South Vietnam’s stygian political system. None of these sources of American defeat was set in motion or significantly worsened either by antiwar activism or by fear of it in Washington.”

The book makes a good case for that conclusion, except, as I said, that in Garfinkle’s determination to discredit the antiwar crazies he underestimates the impact of the “liberal right” opposition to the war. I am sometimes asked whether, thirty years later, I regret having opposed U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. Of course there are some things I said and did that I regret, but no, I do not regret opposing the war. Successive Administration statements about the aims of the war—a factor critical to judging the justice of any conflict—were obscure and frequently contradictory; the human cost of the war was indeterminable; the prosecution of the war was mired in military incompetence and political mendacity. Blame for the disaster that was Vietnam is broadly shared, but the person chiefly responsible, I thought then and think now, was Lyndon Johnson.

But I also thought then and think now that I could have been wrong to oppose U.S. policy. During those years, I had two brothers fighting in Vietnam, I had parishioners killed in Vietnam, and I had my dear friend, the late Paul Ramsey, a moral theologian of great distinction, hammering away relentlessly at my every argument. Opposing the war seemed to me a morally solemn and risky thing to do, which is no doubt why I share Adam Garfinkle’s revulsion from radicalisms that exploited the war to indulge revolutionary fantasies or to excuse the trashing of civilizational constraints.

Telltale Hearts is by no means the last book on Vietnam, but it is one of the best so far. Among its merits is that it helps us understand why for many

years to come Americans will be trying to sort out “the lessons of Vietnam.” And we may be sure that at the end of the road there will be an ultimate sorting out in which all of us who were around then will learn what we should and should not have done during the sixties. In the view of many of us, those years started out with such stirring promise—the civil rights movement of Dr. King, the election of JFK, John XXIII, the Vatican Council—and then they turned out to be, in Auden’s apt phrase for the thirties, a slum of a decade. *Telltale Hearts* recounts some of the seedier aspects of life in the ideological, cultural, and spiritual slums, and helps us understand why the rehabilitation that is perhaps now underway is going to take a very long time.

FT

AND A FOOTNOTE

Adam Garfinkle writes, “Robert S. McNamara has an unusual—perhaps unique—talent for error in that he has not only been ineluctably wrong in all the major policy judgments he has made in his life, but he has subsequently been wrong about how and why he was wrong.” That is a hard judgment, but Garfinkle supports it by reference to the public record and to McNamara’s recent memoir, *In Retrospect*. Last November I was struck by McNamara’s “reconciliation” visit to Hanoi to meet with the former North Vietnamese commander, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap. According to the *New York Times*, McNamara said he found remarkable “the lack of hostility and the willingness to meet and discuss what was in a very real sense a tragedy for both nations.” He added, “There’s really no difference between him and me.”

If he meant that merely as a personal comment about himself and Giap, the Kennedy “whiz kid” and former Secretary of Defense may have said more than he knew. But if the implication is that there is no difference between the U.S. and Hanoi, that is moral equivalence on a grand scale, assuming one can associate Secretary McNamara with anything grand. Thirty years late he has caught up with the Tom Haydens and David Dellingers. The *Times* report continues: “The Vietnamese general sat comfortably, smiling and talkative. He posed for pictures with the journalists gathered nearby. He looked like a grandfather holding court in the family room. Mr. McNamara appeared more the eager and slightly nervous technocrat, furiously scribbling notes on a yellow legal pad as General Giap spoke.”

It took me back to a 1967 meeting in McNamara’s office at the Pentagon. William Sloane Coffin, Rabbi

Heschel, and, I believe, Dick Fernandez of CALC were also there. McNamara was assisted by Cyrus Vance, later Secretary of State under Jimmy Carter, as they earnestly displayed charts illustrating an electronic corridor that would run across the width of Vietnam and would, McNamara assured us, bring the war to a sure and successful conclusion. We, on the other hand, spoke about the criteria of justified war, about prudential judgments, about the failed military-technical fixes of the past, and why it was so difficult to credit the Administration’s optimistic claims about the progress being made in Vietnam. While we talked, McNamara, like an eager and slightly nervous technocrat, furiously scribbled notes on a yellow legal pad.

As we parted, he effusively thanked us for all he had learned from the discussion. I wanted to believe him then, but it was not easy. Thirty years later, after *In Retrospect*, after the Hanoi visit, after his tearful public appearances confessing the “terribly wrong” things the U.S. did in Vietnam, his credibility is not increased. If he is asking forgiveness, of course we should not refuse, although there are others whose forgiveness he needs more than ours. One’s impression, however, is not so much of someone asking forgiveness as of a septuagenarian whiz kid eagerly explaining to us how at last he has figured out how he got it wrong, and in the course of his explanation getting it wrong, albeit very differently wrong, all over again. The kindest thing is simply to look away.

FT

A DISRUPTION BUT NOT A RUPTURE

The issue of the *Weekly Standard* was dated Christmas Day. Against a black background, the cover blazons “ABORTION and the Republican Party,” with the subhead, “A New Approach, by Noemie Emery.” Apart from the infelicity of the date, one wondered why *TWS* thought a new approach was needed. A few months earlier, in the very second issue of William Kristol’s new-born magazine, a strikingly lucid and forceful editorial set forth what was presumably the *TWS* approach to the abortion question. And who is Noemie Emery? Described as a freelance writer, she is (or was) an unknown with absolutely no public record or credibility on issues related to the abortion debate. She was an improbable choice to write an article that seemed to position *TWS* against its own declared convictions.

Her “new” approach, it turns out, is but another turn on the old “personally opposed” lament. Abortion is simply awful but there’s not much to be done about it politically or legally; pro-lifers are only hurting their cause by being perceived as extremists and should content themselves with working for cultural change and helping women with crisis pregnancies. Thanks a lot. Hundreds of thousands of pro-lifers who have over the last twenty-five years given their all to working for the protection of the unborn and have, at great sacrifice, established thousands of crisis pregnancy and postnatal care centers across the country really don’t need advice like that from *TWS*.

The puzzlement deepened when William Bennett’s office faxed the Emery article to all and sundry, suggesting that it helped explain what many viewed as his own recently confused thoughts on what should be done about abortion. *National Review* directed its editorial fire at the Emery-Bennett approach, declaring it morally incoherent and politically dumb. The Republican platform’s proposed constitutional amendment to bring the unborn within the protections of legal due process, *NR* said, was key to Republican success in 1980, 1984, and 1988; to withdraw that proposal now would alienate a large constituency that is crucial to the party and would surrender what most Americans recognize as the moral high ground in the abortion controversy.

It is hard to know what to make of all this. Bennett—who is fond of saying that if you aren’t playing offense you’re playing defense—complains that he has been misunderstood and issues clarifications. It seems unlikely that *TWS* intended with its Christmas issue to spurn the pro-life movement and undercut its own editorial position, although the flap reflects a certain want of editorial purpose, which is perhaps not surprising in a magazine’s initial phase. It would be very surprising were *TWS* and Bennett to align themselves with Governors Weld, Whitman, and Wilson—and with country club and Wall Street funders—in trying to remove the constitutional amendment from the Republican platform.

The fracas has aroused suspicions among many conservatives that the “neocons” associated with *TWS* and Bennett are not as committed as they had claimed to the cultural and moral concerns that drive the conservative insurgency. The immovable keystone in the political architecture of that insurgency is the abortion question, and there is no doubt that some neoconservatives have revealed their ignorance of—or, worse, indifference to—the complex worlds of the pro-life movement. The “paleoconservatives” who rally around Pat Buchanan have long contended that the neocons are really secular liberals who use religion and the cultural issues for their own dubious purposes. The

criticism is grossly unfair, but there is no doubt that it is now getting a more sympathetic hearing. Suspicions once aroused will not easily be dispelled. There is good reason to hope, however, that this disruption will not mean a rupture of the remarkable coalition that in recent years has begun to restore a measure of moral sanity to our public life.

FT

DIALOGUE AND DIVERSIONS

Rabbi Alan Silverstein is president of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, the main association of Conservative rabbis. He is alarmed about religion in politics, and about the Christian Coalition most particularly. He writes, “The official Catholic Church, most mainline Protestant groups, and the vast majority of the Jewish religious community urge the Christian Coalition to turn away from partisan imperatives.” Rabbi Silverstein proposes that Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, and Jews “launch a dialogue across America” without “public policy diversions.” The purpose is to isolate and discredit the Christian Coalition.

In support of his proposal, he cites selected passages from my writings and also invokes the authority of the Catholic bishops conference. While all of us should join the rabbi in warning against the dangers of turning political disagreements into religious warfare, purposeful dialogue about the role of religion in our common life can hardly dismiss concerns for real change as “public policy diversions.” Specifically, Rabbi Silverstein suggests that measures aimed at protecting the unborn “would deny Jews the free exercise of our religious rights” because Judaism teaches that abortion is permissible “if the mother’s emotional health is in jeopardy.” Leave aside the fact that many Jewish authorities challenge such a liberal reading of the tradition, the rabbi’s logic would seem to be an instance of doing precisely what he criticizes others for doing, namely, “imposing their beliefs upon the rest of society.” Judaism says that abortion should be available when wanted for reasons of a woman’s “emotional health,” and therefore “the rest of society” is prevented from legally protecting the unborn.

Rabbi Silverstein is also opposed to vouchers and other means of supporting parental choice in education because they would “tamper with our church/state separation.” “Moreover,” he writes, “only in destitute, inner-city neighborhoods will public vouchers for the proposed \$500 per child

enable poor children to opt for low-cost private education. Certainly in the suburbs, several hundred dollars is not the breaking point between attending or avoiding prestigious prep schools." Well, yes, but the campaign for parental choice is most particularly aimed at helping the poor to escape the devastated and devastating government school systems in our cities, not to help wealthy Jews or gentiles get their kids into prestigious prep schools.

Rabbi Silverstein's call for dialogue and civil discourse is no doubt sincere, and I am honored by his appeal to what I have said on these questions. But I must decline, as the Catholic bishops must surely decline, his invitation to be recruited to his defense of the status quo on abortion, school choice, and much else. Most oldline Protestants and almost all of organized Jewry are terrified by the insurgency represented by the Christian Coalition. However wrongheaded, some of that fear is understandable. Much of it, if not most of it, is simply resentment of a political and moral challenge to the policies and the people that have dominated our public life over the last half century and more. It is perhaps good that the Rabbinical Assembly has been awakened to the challenge, but it is much too late in the day for Rabbi Silverstein's proposed "nonpartisan" dialogue to oppose it. Some of those whom he invites to join him in opposing the challenge are very much part of the challenge. At this late date, the Christian Coalition cannot be isolated, nor should it be. The dialogue that is long overdue is one that would address the increasing isolation of the Rabbinical Assembly, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and other organizations of American Jewry.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Very slowly and carefully, those committed to Christian unity are taking the measure of the ecumenical consequences of the ordination of women. Dr. Eugene Brand of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) usually speaks with great care. Addressing a recent consultation on women in Geneva, however, it seems he got carried away by the need to assure them that the LWF would "not sell out the ordination of women" to gain communion with the Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches. "We should not ask, 'Is it possible to ordain women?' We should ask, 'Is there any earthly reason why women should not be ordained?'" The only answer to that question is no." The *only* answer? In fidelity to a tradition of almost two thousand years, the three

bodies that hold to a sacramental view of ministry in apostolic succession—Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican—unanimously answered the question otherwise. In 1994 and 1995 the Catholic Church again—this time in a form that clearly makes the teaching unchangeable in the future—declared that the Church is not authorized to ordain women to the priesthood. As much as we can say "never" about anything in history, we can say that the Orthodox will never ordain women to the priesthood. The fact is that, among churches with a sacramental and apostolic view of ordination, the tradition was unbroken until 1974 when a few Episcopalian women were illegally ordained. The illegality was later regularized by the Episcopal Church in this country, and now the Church of England has followed suit. But the worldwide Anglican communion, counting fifty to sixty million members, is still divided on the question. The Catholic Church has more than a billion members, and the Orthodox approximately 200 million. It follows that, among the churches holding to a catholic view of ministry, those who have broken with the tradition—and that only within the last few years—claim about 3 percent of the membership. In addition, the great majority of Protestants who do not subscribe to a catholic view of priesthood (Baptists, Missouri Synod Lutherans, orthodox Calvinists, et al.) believe that ordaining women is precluded on biblical grounds. The inescapable conclusion is that ordaining women is a very recent North American-European innovation accepted by a very small part of world Christianity. Whether that very small part represents the wave of the future or a temporary aberration of our theologically confused times is a question about which people can disagree. But to say that no is the "only answer" to the question of whether there is any reason why women should not be (or cannot be) ordained is to write off two millennia of tradition and the practice of the overwhelming majority of Christians in the world today. The assertion is confrontational rather than dialogical. It is a sectarian affront to the ecumenism that the Lutheran World Federation was formed to advance. And it is most atypical of the carefully considered statements that we have over the years come to expect from Dr. Eugene Brand. A small minority of Christians, and a much smaller minority of those holding to a catholic view of ministry, have in recent years decided that it is possible to ordain women to the priesthood. Through reasoned argument they can try to make the case for their innovation. Nobody's interests are served, and least of all is the interest of Christian unity served, by the obiter dictum that it is self-evident that everybody else is wrong.

■ Joan Brown Campbell heads the National Council of Churches (NCC), which still manages to keep an office open in New York, and she is asked by

the *Christian Century* whether it is possible she might meet with the Christian Coalition. "From my side it is. We would have serious disagreements, but I would welcome an honest conversation. When the Pope was here, I was invited to a small reception that included Pat Robertson, Charles Colson, Bill Bright, and others from the far right." Read: We talk with everybody else, so why not with those right-wing kooks as well? Ms. Campbell notes that she met with Billy Graham, "And in one of his crusades he publicly urged people to pray for the NCC." As well we all should while there is still time. For Catholics, who also pray for the dead, the urgency is not so great. She observes that the Reagan and Bush Administrations kept the NCC at a distance. "But there's a dialogue between ourselves and this Administration. There is a feeling that suddenly the NCC is perhaps too close to the Administration. But the fact of the matter is simply that now we have the possibility of dialogue." No doubt the President and the NCC feel one another's pain.

■ The cult of physical fitness has replaced religion in England, according to a writer in the *Spectator*. Nonsense, says John Ashworth-Pearce, who both goes to church and works out at the gym. His letter to the editor continues: "To conflate decisions of this kind into the decay of religious belief may be a good enough idea for a couple of paragraphs in a diary column, but to spin it out to a thousand words is an exercise in the elaboration of the trivial and the complication of the self-evident. It is my conviction that the churches are dying essentially because the gospel they preach sorts ill with what is seen as the twentieth century's greatest human good—continual and increasing material prosperity. The notion of an eternal reward does not appeal to a society increasingly insistent on a regular increment of jam today, if not sooner."

■ A while back we praised a reflection by the then editor of the *Spectator* (London) on why he and his wife were so very grateful for their Down's syndrome baby. Andrew Sullivan, Editor of the *New Republic*, was also impressed by the piece and asked for permission to reprint it, which was readily granted. Then Marty Peretz, Editor-in-Chief, got into the act and vetoed the idea. Apparently, the idea that there's an alternative to aborting handicapped babies seemed to him suspiciously like, well, a pro-life position. An embarrassed Sullivan reported that they wouldn't be able to run the article after all, and the *Spectator*, in response, twitted Sullivan about his having left England, where at least editors have editorial freedom. Sullivan does not refer to this unpleasantness in a subsequent comment in *TNR*, but one may read it as his apologia for coming to America. He had just been on a book tour in Britain and was depressed by the shallowness of public discussion over questions such as British

participation in the European Union. "But in Britain, the shrinking of the country's role in the world, the tininess and chumminess of its cultural elite (most of whom have known each other since freshman year), have cumulatively deoxygenated the public space. The result is that constructive public argument has become rarer and rarer." The roots of this unhappy circumstance, Sullivan suggests, go deep. "There may be deeper, cultural reasons for this, as well. The decline of religion is probably one. It's simply not part of most English people's upbringing to consider—let alone believe—the possibility of universal truths. Since the sixteenth century, when the state brutally extirpated Catholicism, English faith has been resolutely parochial. (As one Oxford friend of mine put it: 'I believe in the Church of England—as a bulwark against religion.') Equally insidious is the dominance in England of analytic philosophy. Virtually no English undergraduate reads, say, the *Nicomachean Ethics* with a view to seeing whether Aristotle might be voicing eternal truths about human nature. So the intellectual muscles that allow serious public debate to take place atrophy young." Sullivan allows that American universities have problems, but they are superior to the "nests of pragmatism and relativism" that pass for universities in England. "When I first came over to America to study at Harvard twelve years ago, I was struck by a simple difference between Oxford and Harvard undergrads. Both were as smart and knew about as much. But the Harvardites were keen to ask about what they didn't know; the Oxonians devoted their entire energy to convincing you that they already knew it. The skills required to do that—rhetorical sleight of hand, on-your-feet wit, exquisite condescension—are, of course, what many Americans admire about English culture. But they're not the same as sophistication. Or knowledge. Believe me." In hiring personal secretaries, museum curators, and professors, an English accent still has a certain cachet in the U.S., but Sullivan urges Americans to get over it. "In filling cultural and academic institutions with British imports, Americans would do well to ask if they're not importing manners that are ultimately corrosive of civil discourse. The English elites chatter marvelously. They stopped believing in anything half a century ago." In sum, and even if Mr. Peretz does clip his editorial wings from time to time, it seems that Mr. Sullivan is here to stay.

■ Johanna is the youngest sister and she lives in Valparaiso, Indiana. She's the normal one in the Neuhaus family. Except she reads and loves FT. We estimate that there must be at least fifty thousand people of a similar eccentricity, and many of them are not being treated by a subscription. Send us your list of candidates from among your family members, friends, and associates and we'll send them a free

sample issue in your name. Like Johanna, they may otherwise be quite normal people. Please do it soon. Like right away.

■ *Moment* is a Jewish publication of consequence, and Suzanne F. Singer is its reflective managing editor. In a comment titled "Jewish Insensitivity" she reflects on a meeting between Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) at which Reed reassured his Jewish hearers that the Coalition is alert to their concerns. Singer observes, "But there is something Reed didn't say. Sensitivity—a word made wimpy by overuse—has sometimes been lacking not only by Christians toward Jews, but also by Jews toward Christians. Jews, especially but not exclusively secular liberals who constitute the bulk of visible, media-active Jews, have a sad record of disrespect and mistrust of religious people, and that includes religious Jews as well as religious Christians. People who talk God, who place religion centrally in their lives and see it as a guide and source of their values, who actively and openly practice their faith, are too frequently derided and suspected of narrow-mined anti-intellectualism." While she agrees that it is necessary to support the separation of church and state and to stand up for Jewish interests, Singer criticizes Jews who "have rushed to build a wall around the debate" in a way that tries to exclude "religion's voice" from our political discourse. Singer's is still a minority voice in American Jewry, but the view she proposes is getting a more sympathetic hearing these days. In a recent presentation at Jewish Theological Seminary here in New York, I made similar points. Some of the responses suggested, in effect, that Jews, who constitute 2 percent of the American population, had the duty to maintain a strictly secular society against the threat of the more than 90 percent of Americans who are Christians. Most of those in the dominantly Jewish audience, however, recognized that such a suggestion is both strategically impossible and a denial of the moral tradition shared by Jews and Christians. For those who have worked on Christian-Jewish relations over the years, the progress in mutual understanding sometimes seems painfully slow. But there is progress, and any pains involved should only prompt us to redouble our efforts.

■ In recent years Catholics have had to put up with the ugly usage of "Sundays in Ordinary Time," when in fact Sundays in the well-ordered time of the Church's Year of Grace are never ordinary. In any event, on the "Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time" the first reading is Exodus 17, where Moses needs help in keeping his arms raised so that Joshua can defeat the enemy. The Liturgical Press of Collegeville, Minnesota has a Sunday bulletin service that is used in who knows how many parishes, and on that Sunday it contained a

commentary by a Fr. Daniel Durken, O.S.B. It is in the form of "A Memo to Moses," in which Fr. Durken tells Moses that, instead of propping up his hands, he should have "propped up peace." He goes on: "Whether or not you would have considered such an alternative tactic, I want you to know, Moses, that most of the men and women, young and old, in the Bible classes I teach get mighty tired—yes, sick and tired!—of reading about all those bloody biblical battles, those massive massacres, those wholesale killings of combatants and civilians alike, that 'putting to the sword all living creatures in the city: men and women, young and old, as well as oxen, sheep and asses' (Joshua 6:21). I remember that you were not allowed to enter the Promised Land of Israel's kingdom. But I am sure you have long since entered the Promised Land of God's kingdom. I suspect that you were mighty surprised to discover that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of War, Destruction, and Death but rather the God of Peace, Love, and Life." Now isn't that clever? If the folk at Liturgical Press were given to thinking about such things, they would recognize that the "Memo to Moses" implies that God should never have elected the people of Israel, should not have delivered them from the Egyptians, and should not have given them the promised land, with the result that there would never have been the salvation history from which came the world's redemption. Fr. Durken and his friends would likely protest that that is not what they had in mind. What they had in mind, so to speak, was simply to exhibit their refined sensibilities and utter superiority to the primitive ways of the Bible. One wonders what the thousands of parishioners thought who were confronted by "A Memo to Moses." The long-suffering patience of the Catholic people is one of the mysteries of the faith. Perhaps some of them consoled themselves with the observation of Flannery O'Connor that one is called to suffer ever so much more from the Church than for the Church.

■ A Richard Weil writes to the *New York Times*: "Recently, a close friend of mine, a former West Side Democratic political activist, switched from straight to lesbian. Two former political colleagues of hers met at a dinner party in the Hamptons. One asked the other if she had seen Arlene lately. The friend replied that she had and 'haven't you heard,' Arlene has switched. Horrified, he said, 'You mean she became a Republican?'" Nothing so drastic as that.

■ Pastor Russell Saltzman, my successor as editor of *Forum Letter* (Lutheran), says he received a flyer from his local drugstore in Missouri. In the upper left-hand corner, Trojan condoms are on sale (twelve-pack for \$5.99). Next to it, in the upper right-hand corner, First Response One-Step Pregnancy Test Kit (\$9.99). In the lower left-hand corner, Value Wise Diapers (thirty medium or twenty large at \$3.99),

and on the lower right-hand corner, Evenflow baby bottles (no price given). One-stop shopping to cover every contingency, Pr. Saltzman suggests. Happily missing, however, is the second and lethal response to the First Response Pregnancy Test. In New York it's different. A local drugstore over on Third Avenue advertises itself as full-service. They do referrals (and get kickbacks?) for contraceptive users who refuse to accept life's negation of their negation.

■ *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*. That is the title of a book of previously uncollected essays by the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Grandeur and audacity are what marked the work and persona of the one whom we called Heschel, when we didn't refer to him as Father Abraham (which he much enjoyed). Heschel is, I believe, the foremost spiritual figure of American Jewry in this century. Of course I am prejudiced, if that is the right word, by knowing him as a dear friend and treasured mentor. Farrar, Straus & Giroux has just reissued his classic *The Sabbath* in a handsome new edition. Read it, and be prepared to be transformed in your understanding of time and holiness. As for the book of essays, one can dip in almost anywhere and come up with wisdom for long ponderings. This, for example, from "Death as Homecoming": "The ultimate hope for a life beyond the grave was not born in reflection about the soul but rather in reflection about God and what He does and means to the soul. God's being a shelter and a refuge forever held meaning to life here and now as well as to life beyond. The meaning as well as the mode of being which man hopes to attain beyond the threshold of dying remains an impenetrable mystery. Yet it is the thought of being in God's knowing that may be both the root and the symbol of the ultimate hope. As said above, man's being in the world is, according to the Bible, preceded by man's being known to God. Human existence follows divine anticipation. 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you' (Jeremiah 1:5). We live in the universe of His knowing. What guides and sustains our thinking about afterlife is relatedness to God. Apart from such relatedness and trust, there is no ground for such a hope. The real issue is whether my existence here and now is exclusively being-in-the-world or whether it is also being-in-God's-knowledge, whether being in the world is not also living in the presence of God, transcended by His knowing, escorted by His radiance." Grandeur, audacity, radiance. That was Heschel. That is Heschel.

■ By the narrowest of margins, Ireland voted to allow divorce under very limited circumstances. If the vote survives legal challenges, be sure that in short order there will be agitation to "liberalize" divorce law. And in Britain the Lord Chancellor is pushing a "divorce reform bill" that, twenty-five years later, picks up on the no-fault idea that has had such miserable consequences in this country.

Writing in the *Tablet*, Melanie Phillips says that Lord Mackay is possessed by a really dumb idea: "Removing fault from divorce kills off marriage as a concept with any legal meaning at all. Fault describes what happens when someone is held responsible for their bad behavior. Abolishing fault in divorce abolishes the concept of responsibility in civil marriage. Since the obligations in marriage to be faithful or stay together or treat each other reasonably are merely inferred from the legal remedies in divorce, their removal renders marriage a vapid concept. Moreover, refusing to acknowledge bad behavior makes divorce unjust and is likely to increase bitterness rather than diminish it. True, fault has already become a pretty etiolated concept. But removing it still matters because of the rhetorical and declaratory effect of law upon public policy and attitudes. It would introduce the no-pain, no-blame, no-shame justice system. In every other area of the law, the prime consideration is not the avoidance of pain but to make people who have done wrong face the consequence of their actions. Removing fault from divorce is an attempt to sanitize proceedings by getting the parties to collude in an evasion of truth. The argument runs that matrimonial disputes are too sensitive and complex for anyone to apportion blame, and that the law has no business poking its nose into personal behavior. But that is an argument for abolishing the whole of matrimonial law. It certainly does not apply in the law of contract which enforces agreements and penalizes broken promises." Ms. Phillips is not an alarmist, but she is rightly alarmed about where all this is heading. "That agenda is the erosion and ultimate abolition of the legal concept of marriage. It is a theme that family lawyers have been promoting for years through both statute and case law. The wonder is that Lord Mackay, a man of stern and unbending religious principles, has become its accomplice. The most likely explanation for this astonishing paradox is that Lord Mackay believes that law is helpless before the crushing tide of cultural forces. It cannot change behavior; it should not impose morality. All it can do is fiddle around on the margins to minimize the worst of the consequences. But law does directly affect behavior, illustrated by the dramatic rise in divorce after every divorce reform over the past twenty-five years. Of course the law did not create the cultural primacy of individual choice and moral equivalence which fuels the divorce rate. But law and morality cannot be divided. Law reflects but also asserts and reinforces the moral values of a society. Assuming neutrality merely helps impose a code of moral relativism. The law cannot ever opt out; and those who shape it shape our moral choices, whether they like it or not. Those choices are currently amoral, hedonistic, and pretend to be consequence-free. Those who support the proposed divorce reform will be reinforcing

those values. To suppose the measure takes us in the other direction is merely wishful thinking."

■ Stories regularly appear on the gap between Protestant and Catholic financial giving. The usual indication is that Protestants give to their churches almost twice as much as Catholics. Now comes a study funded by the Lilly Endowment suggesting that the difference should really not surprise us. Overwhelmingly, both Protestants and Catholics view stewardship not as a spiritual discipline but as a matter of "paying the bills," and there are fewer bills to pay per Catholic. Compensation is much less for Catholic priests than for Protestant ministers; Catholics have a much higher parishioner-to-clergy ratio; and the number of services per Catholic church building makes for greater efficiency in capital costs. It makes sense. Having settled that one, maybe everyone can now move on to stewardship as spiritual discipline.

■ "Call to Action" had its big fest in Chicago again. With four thousand in attendance, which is not unimpressive. The usual goings on, including a "traditional yet broadly inclusive" liturgy in which eight women attempted to celebrate the eucharist. With one priest at the altar, just in case. Although the report notes that he did not wear a stole. They didn't want to be *that* traditional. There were the usual speakers, including "silenced theologians such as Frs. Charles Curran and Matthew Fox." Silent theologians are very popular speakers on the progressive circuit. One recalls Fox's full-page advertisement soliciting money in the *New York Times* a few years ago. It began with the banner headline, "I Have Been Silenced!" Since then he has become a San Francisco Episcopalian, but when you have had the distinction of being silenced by Rome you don't discard it just because you changed churches. The *National Catholic Reporter* story on the Chicago gathering begins this way: "Some 400 thirsting priests, 1,200 toiling sisters, 2,400 hungry seekers from the laity—they came here to the water of progressive Catholicism." Water? What about rest? What about food? Old habits such as clericalism die hard. Even among the super-progressive, the priests are still the only ones who get what they want.

■ Remember the incident at the Addenbrooke Hospital in Cambridge, England, where lab tests got mixed up and a healthy baby was aborted instead of the Down's syndrome baby who was supposed to be aborted? It has caused quite a flurry of public discussion, and Dominic Lawson, editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, has a good grasp of the basics. He notes that the only sure way to find out whether the unborn baby has Down's syndrome is through invasive surgical techniques which have a one in two hundred chance of causing spontaneous abortion. Since the test is very widely used both there and here,

it seems certain that hundreds, if not thousands, of babies with no genetic abnormalities have been aborted by—to use the term of Addenbrooke's director of medical genetics—"mistake." Lawson thinks some rather elementary truths are being slighted: "Modern medicine, however, regards these babies as necessary, if unfortunate, casualties in the war against abnormality. And Down's syndrome is far and away the commonest form of genetic abnormality. But a Down's child is not an unhealthy child. Down's is not a disease. Such a child is not infectious—or no more than any other child. Such a child suffers no pain or distress—or no more than any other child. I would not have believed that such obvious points needed to be made, until I read the newspaper reports of the Addenbrooke's incident: all of them consistently insisted on referring to the horror of the abortion of 'the healthy baby,' as if the Down's child which was also aborted after the mix-up of samples was discovered was, by definition, 'unhealthy.' I am the parent of a child with Down's syndrome, Domenica, and she is a picture of rude health, strong and robust. Indeed, on a couple of occasions, while the rest of the family has gone down with heavy colds, Domenica has maintained an almost brutal imperviousness to the germs hurtling around her little head. It is true that Domenica will have some degree of mental retardation. It could be severe. It could be very slight. We will not know for some years. But mental handicap is not the same as mental illness. A slow child is not a lunatic. And above all, a child suffering from Down's syndrome will not necessarily be unhappier than any other child. Indeed, children with this condition very often seem capable of greater love and happiness than those with a normal chromosomal make-up. Again, I would not have thought this point needed making, except that the barbaric consequences of modern eugenic screening seem to be gratefully accepted by many parents-to-be on the basis that children with Down's syndrome will be so unhappy that they would be better off dead."

■ You may recall the famous headline in the English daily: "Heavy Fog in Channel, Europe Cut Off." You'll see the connection in a minute. Thomas C. Fox is one of the progressives whose public statements throw into question the widespread assumption that the silly season in American Catholicism is finally coming to an end. He is author of *Sexuality and Catholicism*, a heavy-breathing tract that denounces Catholic sexual teaching for being not only medieval but still stuck in moral hang-ups that go all the way back to biblical times. Fox is best known, however, as Editor of the *National Catholic Reporter*, a lefty weekly published in Kansas City. Recently he had a piece on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*, denouncing the Vatican's statement that the Church lacks authority to ordain women. "Conservatives," Fox

writes, cheer the statement because they “want a church that reaffirms a clear moral vision.” The implication is that that is a really dumb thing to want. But Fox knows that the statement on women’s ordination is “a fearful act by a small group of men who are out of touch with the wider society.” Out of touch like John Paul II, for example, whose words and example galvanize millions upon millions of young people from Manila to New York to Nairobi. Leaving that aside, the point of Mr. Fox’s article is that of course the Church will eventually ordain women, and then those who support the Church’s teaching as articulated by John Paul II may find themselves in schism. “How sad,” Mr. Fox concludes, “that those who share his views may cut themselves off from the Church one day.” Which brings us back to that famous headline. Heavy Fog in Kansas City, Catholic Church Cut Off.

■ “Do you know the name of the gay gene?” the joke runs. Back comes the answer, “Levi 501s.” This is from David Starkey, a homosexual writing in the London *Spectator*. He explains that Levi 501s are the favorite jeans of gay men, fitting very tightly and worn with the bottom fly button unfastened. Starkey, like many homosexuals, doesn’t like the idea that homosexuality is genetically determined, and is pleased to note that “research” to that effect has been widely discredited. He especially does not like the argument of Andrew Sullivan, Editor of the *New Republic*, that marriage is natural and universal and therefore same-sex “marriage” should be available to homosexuals who have no control over the way they are. (See Elizabeth Kristol’s review of Sullivan’s *Virtually Normal* in FT, January). Marriage, says Starkey, is a social construct “whose time, as eventually happens to all human institutions, has passed.” “I too, like Mr. Sullivan, am a gay Conservative. But he is a Burkean Conservative who believes that society is natural. I, on the other hand, am in the tradition of Hobbes and Oakeshott and think that human society is a human construct. For Mr. Sullivan, the ‘gay gene’ is to be welcomed, because it makes gayness natural. I see it as a thing indifferent, since our sexual orientation is not in our genes but in ourselves. But the fact that our sexual orientation is artificial does not separate us from modern society. On the contrary, modern society is the most artificial thing there is. That is what distinguishes its comforts from the state of nature in which, as Hobbes pointed out, life was ‘nasty, brutish, and short.’ We homosexuals should rejoice in modernity; we should also be proud that, as Mr. George Steiner points out, modernity has been created by two groups, Jews and homosexuals. The joke was right after all: Levi’s jeans tell us more about the gay condition than bits and pieces of genetic tissue, even when rightly identified.” Whether homosexuality is a matter of genes or of jeans may seem like a frivolous way of framing the

question, but the question itself is important to the determination of the debate over same-sex “marriage,” as that debate is currently being engaged in Hawaii and elsewhere. A painful life circumstance that is genetically determined elicits more public sympathy than a propensity for going about with one’s fly unbuttoned.

■ Seldom is a doctrine stated so flatly. Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri writes a long letter to the *Wall Street Journal* protesting Speaker Newt Gingrich’s claim that failed government programs, especially in welfare and education, should be scaled back and thoroughly redesigned. Gephardt acknowledges that many of these programs have not worked, mainly because they were not designed for the kind of criminal and violent world that many of our inner cities have become. The answer, he says, is more generous funding for more expansive programs. He writes, “So even though these programs were not intended to serve as substitutes for broken or dysfunctional families, maybe they should be—not just in poorer communities, but in all communities.” This is a particularly lucid statement of public policy designed by pathologies rather than by strengths. Instead of asking how policy can support and expand the number of strong families, policy is premised upon family failure. The government provides “substitutes” for failed families, thereby giving families an interest in qualifying as failed in order to obtain government benefits. Policy by pathology has contributed powerfully to the devastation of the urban underclass, and Mr. Gephardt would now expand the same approach to “all communities.” For people who really care about the disadvantaged, it is at this point that the argument needs to be joined. Is it to the advantage of the poor (economically, culturally, and morally poor) to have the government take over their lives, or to have policies that provide incentives and disincentives that encourage them to accept responsibility for their own behavior? There are many ways of putting that question, and there are many parts to any plausible answer. But that is the critical domestic policy question that will, for better or worse, shape the American future. We are indebted to Mr. Gephardt for the clarity with which he gives one answer to it.

■ Pity the poor abortionists who want to be known as compassionate, courageous caregivers devoted to helping women in trouble. No, don’t. They are a sleazy, greedy, murderous gang making big bucks in the death business. Maybe twenty and more years ago there were more innocent types who had not thought very carefully about what they were doing, but today that is most improbable. Howard J. Silverman of Brookline, Mass. runs for-profit clinics that are said to do a third of the thirty-five thousand

abortions per year in that state. In 1984 he was disciplined for sexual misconduct with an eighteen-year-old patient, and now has to rely on other doctors to admit patients to hospitals in emergency cases. Nothing so unusual about that. That's the kind of people attracted to the profession of killing babies. Silverman's innovation, according to the papers, is in manipulating ultrasound tests. His clinics charge \$300 to \$500 for a first-trimester abortion, but after fourteen weeks more complicated terminations are \$700, and at twenty-two weeks can cost \$2,100. Telling women that the tests show that their pregnancies are farther advanced than they thought is a big bonus for the Silverman enterprise. Some years ago, repentant abortionist Dr. Bernard Nathanson used ultrasound to produce *The Silent Scream*, a film that graphically depicts the suffering of the child being aborted. It was thought that facing the stark reality of the deed would turn people against abortion, and that often happens. The *Boston Globe*, the paper that broke the Silverman story, is outraged. Not by what Silverman does, of course, but by his overcharging for the doing of it. I remember reading years ago about a much-publicized scandal in Germany in 1943 or 1944. It seems this railroad official was getting kickbacks on the coal burned by the trains running to the death camps, which greatly outraged the public sense of moral rectitude.

■ When Alexander Kwasniewski narrowly defeated incumbent Lech Walesa—Solidarity hero, Nobel Prize-winner, and household name—for the Polish presidency, the *New York Times* and others declared it a great defeat for the Church. It is true that, while not endorsing anyone, most bishops and priests favored Walesa. It is also true that even his supporters acknowledged that Walesa had been an inept president and plodding candidate. Anne Applebaum, that astute observer of Central and Eastern Europe, puts the outcome in perspective: "What this election really proves, in fact, is not that Poland has rejected the legacy of Solidarity, or that Poles long for bread queues and censorship, but that Poland is finally—at last—becoming a normal country. As in a normal country, the more telegenic candidate won. As in a normal country, the candidate with the most money won. As in a normal country, the candidate who kept talking about the past emerged the loser; Walesa's attacks on Kwasniewski, mostly focused on his Communist career, were not powerful enough to sway even an essentially anti-Communist country like Poland. As in a normal country, the winning candidate is a super-professional political operator, with a handful of shady friends and the odd hidden business deal kicking around in the background. Perhaps we should not have expected any less."

■ Give a boy a hammer and he discovers that the

whole world needs hammering. Certify somebody as a liturgist and he discovers that every liturgy needs to be changed, and changed, and changed. . . . The Catholic Church once had a liturgical movement; Vatican Council II blessed it, and it turned itself into a liturgical change machine. Now, quite spontaneously, two efforts have been launched to try to go back to that liturgical movement and get it right this time. One, led by Fr. Joseph Fessio of Ignatius Press, is called *Adoremus*, a Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy. The other, led by Msgr. Francis Mannion of Salt Lake City Cathedral, is the Society for Catholic Liturgy. (Fr. Fessio can be reached at Ignatius Press, 2515 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94118 and Msgr. Mannion at Cathedral of the Madeleine, 331 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.)

■ Monsignor George Higgins writes a column that is widely published in the Catholic press. In a recent time around he deplores, quite rightly, the cultural decline represented by pornography and other vices. Then this: "Neoconservative proponents of democratic capitalism tend to argue, as a general rule, that capitalism is independent of the moral cultural order and that its moral failures are due to people outside the system." One can hardly imagine a proposition more contrary to the argument made over the years by any identifiable neoconservative, and especially by Michael Novak, whom Msgr. Higgins has most particularly in his sights. Falsehood is compounded by silliness when Msgr. Higgins in the same column cites in support of his charge Llewellyn Rockwell, Jr. Rockwell, who flaunts his identification as a "paleoconservative," publishes a newsletter that is a sustained rant against "the neoconservatives." Msgr. Higgins' columns are enough to make one despair, at least at times, of the very possibility of public conversation or civil disagreement. 'Tis a pity.

■ Although typically from the margins of evangelicaldom, the attack on "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT) shows no signs of abating. Articles and books keep appearing, and at an airport recently my eye was caught by a front page story in *USA Today*, "Growing Debate Over ECT." That, I thought, was a bit much. It turned out the story was about shock treatment, otherwise known as Electroconvulsive Therapy. Which is what I suppose "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" has been for some. Be assured that the polemics have in no way obscured the fact that the ECT initiative continues to be warmly welcomed by most influential figures among both Catholics and evangelicals, and for that all of us are very grateful.

■ "Acts of Reconstruction: The Sistine Chapel." That's the title of a conference in Santa Barbara, California, sponsored by the Getty Center for the

History of Art and the Humanities. The dates are March 8 to 9, and a stellar cast of art authorities from the U.S. and Europe is scheduled. For information, contact Simon Williams, 3591 Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106 (805-893-7660).

■ Once again, the three-week seminar on "The Free Society and Centesimus Annus" will be held in Krakow, Poland. Faculty includes Michael Novak, George Weigel, Maciej Zieba, and your scribe. The dates are July 1 through 21. There are ten fellowships available for American graduate students or those who will be college seniors this coming fall. An essay and other materials required. Students will be chosen in April. For information, write Brian C. Anderson, American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20036, or call (202) 862-7152.

■ To whom are we supposed to send these sample issues?

■ Congratulations to the *New Oxford Review* on its twentieth anniversary. That's the little magazine with the big ads in every other magazine in the country, or so it seems. Around here we rather like *NOR*, not least because in their survey of their readers so many *NOR* subscribers say that FT is their favorite publication. And because editor Dale Vree is an engaging fellow, despite his lefty background. When he comes across the word "compassion" in the Church's social teaching, he tends to translate it "socialism." But of late he seems to be getting that ideological twitch under control. Almost every issue of *NOR* has something of particular interest. In the November 1995 issue, for instance, there is a report by Thomas M. Gannon on a forthcoming decision by the Supreme Court, dated June 24, 1996. *NOR* doesn't say how Mr. Gannon got hold of an advance copy. It seems the Court has decided that laws requiring noncustodial parents to support minor children violate the parents' right to choose. Some states suspended the driver's license of parents who refused to pay up. The 6-3 ruling draws heavily on the Court's 1992 decision, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which reaffirmed a woman's right to an abortion. Parental support provisions, says the Court, impermissibly encroach on the substantive guarantees of personal liberty in the Due Process Clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. The report continues: "Justice Souter's majority opinion noted that the Court had afforded 'constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to family relationships,' and had 'respected the private realm of family life which the state cannot enter.' Like the abortion decision, the justice wrote, the decision not to pay child support is

one of 'the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy,' and therefore 'central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.' That liberty includes 'the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.' Thus, Justice Souter reasoned, if a noncustodial parent decides that child support is not a personally meaningful concept, a state cannot compel the parent to accept that concept as meaningful by requiring the parent to pay child support or risk losing a driver's or professional license. The choice not to pay child support is a 'substantive liberty of the person,' the justice wrote. Moreover, he maintained, it is not only unconstitutional but un-American to tie possession of a driver's license to the payment of child support. Justice Souter unequivocally stated that 'a driver's license is an essential component of the American dream.'" We advise readers to wait for the official publication of the decision, since *NOR* does say that "satirical notions come unbidden" to Mr. Gannon and it is therefore just possible that he is making this up.

Sources: Robert McNamara quoted in *New York Times*, November 10, 1995. Data on doctors opposed to abortion, *Life Insight*, October 1995. Alan Silverstein on religion and public life in New Jersey *MetroWest Jewish News*, December 7, 1995.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Eugene Brand on ordination of women, *National Catholic Reporter*, November 10, 1995. Joan Brown Campbell quoted in *Christian Century*, November 8, 1995. John Ashworth-Pearce on physical fitness and the future of the churches, *Spectator*, November 4, 1995. Andrew Sullivan on the decline of intellectual and political discourse in Britain, *New Republic*, November 20, 1995. Suzanne Singer on "Jewish Insensitivity," *Moment*, August 1995. Fr. Daniel Durkin's "Memo to Moses," Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 22, 1995. Richard Weil letter to *New York Times*, November 22, 1995. On drugstore advertising, *Forum Letter*, November 1995. Melanie Phillips on no-fault divorce, *Tablet*, November 11, 1995. On Catholic and Protestant giving, November 30, 1995 release by Empty Tomb, Inc., Champaign, Illinois. On "Call To Action," *National Catholic Reporter*, November 17, 1995. On mistaken abortion at Addenbrooke Hospital, *Daily Telegraph*, November 16, 1995. Thomas C. Fox on ordination, *New York Times*, November 25, 1995. David Starkey on the "gay gene," *Spectator*, November 18, 1995. Richard Gephardt letter to *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1995. On Dr. Howard J. Silverman, *New York Times*, December 10, 1995. Anne Applebaum on Polish elections, *New Republic*, December 11, 1995. Diane Knippers on NCC, Institute on Religion and Democracy news release, December 1, 1995. George Higgins on neoconservatives and capitalism in the *Pilot*, October 13, 1995.

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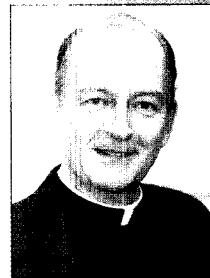
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ISSUES IN THE ROUND

Dear Catholic Reader,

Did you ever notice how the Catholic teachings on contraception, homosexuality, surrogate motherhood, assisted suicide, on and on, fail to connect with our fellow Americans? In fact, you and I can be a little puzzled by these teachings, too. Why is that?

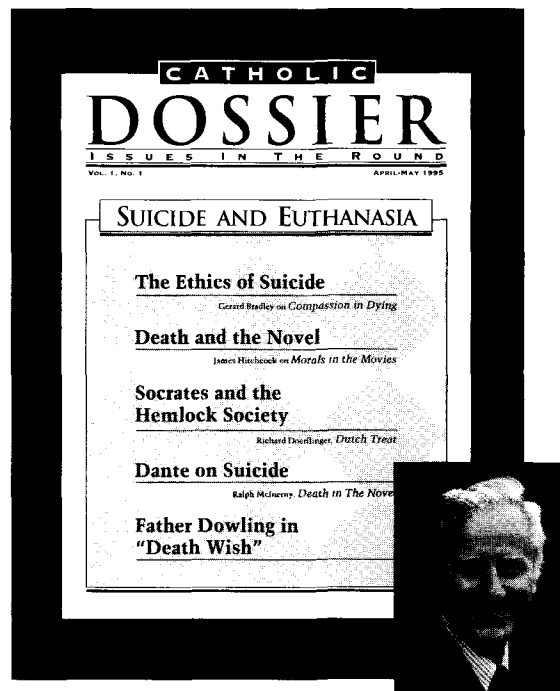
In both cases, an attempt is made to place a truth into a cultural context that is hostile to it. No need to point out that dominant moral attitudes in the United States are hostile to the Church. They are also at odds with the public moral commonplaces of only a short time ago.

The fact is that truths need a true context in order to be understood. Catholic truths, and the once public moral commonplaces, just don't fit into a world view that sees the human person as his own artifact, in ultimate charge of life and death, the maker of moral law rather than governed by it. That world view is held by many and influences everyone, including Catholics. It is this realization that led to the founding of America's newest Catholic magazine, **Catholic Dossier**.

We take a look at an issue like suicide and euthanasia from the various compass points of Catholic culture — theological, philosophical, legal, literary, artistic, spiritual — to recall the wider assumptions that underwrite the moral prohibition of suicide. The Galileo case is the focus of another issue, arming Catholics against the false claim that the Church is opposed to science. Future issues will consider homosexuality, natural law, moral relativism, abortion, anti-Catholicism, religion and politics, feminism, apologetics, and much more. In every instance, the topic will be seen within the supporting context of the Catholic outlook. The idea is to reacquaint the Catholic with the concrete cultural context within which his faith can flourish — the Catholic culture that has defined the West but now is under great assault.

A Catholic without the mind of the Church, a Catholic who gives allegiance to religious doctrines which do not really fit into his actual wider view of the world, is schizophrenic. He is on a collision course. He will either lose his faith or become a fideist who thinks there is no relation between what he believes and what he knows. **Catholic Dossier** is aimed at strengthening the Catholicism of its readers. The best and brightest writers will appear in each issue. There is nothing else like **Catholic Dossier**.

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